



Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square

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Published in 2006 by

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and
Cultural Organization
Kathmandu Office
KAT-CLT-2005/2006

Printed by

Design Venture Pvt. Ltd.

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KAT/2006/PI/H/1



National Federation of
UNESCO Associations in Japan

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HANUMAN DHOKA DURBAR SQUARE



PATAN DURBAR SQUARE



BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE



BAUDDHANATH



SWAYAMBHU



PASHUPATI



CHANGU NARAYAN

CULTURAL PORTRAIT HANDBOOKS

Heritage and culture can be discovered and enjoyed throughout the Kathmandu Valley. Seven monument zones in particular were recognised to be of outstanding universal value by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and have therefore been added to the List of World Heritage Sites (WHL).

The World Heritage Sites includes cultural and natural heritage sites from all over the world, and the World Heritage Convention provides a legal tool for their protection. Of the 812 World Heritage Sites, four are located in Nepal, namely the Kathmandu Valley, Sagarmatha National Park, Royal Chitwan National Park and Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

The diverse monument zones of the Kathmandu Valley embody the uniquely intricate and yet refined Newari urban buildings and an incredible mix of Hindu and Buddhist culture. The Valley provides an example of mixed architectural styles and exquisite craftsmanship. Its very composition makes it one of the most complex World Heritage Sites on the WHL: not only does

it include the historic centers of valley's main cities it also encompasses remarkable living Hindu and Buddhist monuments.

The site was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1979 as it bears a unique testimony to a cultural tradition which is living (criteria iii) and is an outstanding example of a group of buildings that illustrate a significant stage in human history (criteria iv). The Valley is also the context for many living traditions and events, with artistic works of outstanding universal value (criteria vi).

This handbook is one of seven that were prepared as part of a wider awareness raising campaign aimed at focusing both local and international attention on the need to preserve the Kathmandu Valley WHS. Generous funding from the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) has enabled the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu to prepare these publications highlighting the gems of the Valley and their rich mythological and historical background.



KATHMANDU VALLEY: History and Architecture overview

by Kai Weise

EARLY HISTORY

The Swayambhu Purana relates the myth of the creation of the Kathmandu Valley to the existence of a great lake, the Taodhanahrada. It has been geologically verified that a lake did exist in the Valley during the Pleistocene era.

The Kiratas, mentioned in Hindu religious books such as the Mahabharata, are believed to have ruled the Valley as far back as the 7th century BC. The mention of non-Sanskrit names in Licchavi inscriptions indicates that the Valley was at that time ruled by an ethnic group that spoke a Tibeto-Burman or possibly 'proto-Newari' language. The Kiratas probably had their capital in Gokarna and founded the holy site at Gokameshvara. The four stupas in the cardinal directions around Patan, known as the Ashoka stupas, are considered to date back to this period.

LICCHAVI PERIOD

c. 200 TO c. 750

The origin of the Licchavi rulers is not exactly known. They may have broken away from the northern Indian branch during the first half of the 3rd century, or even earlier, however it is also possible that local rulers in the Kathmandu Valley adopted this name. The arts and politics of the Licchavis were influenced by the highly developed Gupta culture in India, which is why this period is often referred to as the “Classical Era” of Kathmandu. At this time, trade links between India and Tibet grew, bringing with it prosperity and religious tolerance.

The earliest inscription in the Valley, found at Changu Narayan 464 AD, dates back to this period. The Licchavi kings founded some of the Valley’s most venerable shrines, including the

Vaishnavite

temple of Changu Narayan, the Shivaite temple of Pashupati and the Buddhist stupa of Swayambhu. Other than chaityas and primitive shelters housing lingas, a number of fine quality sculptures from the Licchavi period have remained preserved in situ in the Valley. No larger buildings survive from the Licchavi period, mainly because, although most of the holy sites were already established by the 8th century, these buildings were generally reconstructed and embellished during the Malla period.

THAKURI PERIOD

c. 750 TO 1200

Little evidence is remaining of the period between the Licchavis and the Mallas, which is referred to as the “Post-Lichhavi Period (C. 879 – 1200)” or even the “Dark Ages”. In 879 AD, the “Nepal Samvat”, a new era, began. At that time a large

number of migrants, fleeing from the Muslim invasion in northern India, came to the Valley, which was controlled by powerful nobles known as the Thakuris. Close links were kept with the Pala dynasty in Bengal.

At this time Vajrayana Buddhism and Tantrism became widespread in the Valley. In the 10th century, King Gunakamadeva is attributed with founding Kathmandu in the form of Manjushree’s sword. Kasthamandapa in Kathmandu, Kwa Baha in Lalitpur and the Tripura Palace in Bhaktapur were also founded. From the 11th century onwards manuscripts emerged from the viharas and bahas, though the quality of stone sculpture deteriorated.

Even though the Valley must have been strewn with settlements, viharas

and bahas by the 12th century, only a few buildings from this period remain. One of the oldest existing buildings in the Valley is the Kasthamandapa, in Kathmandu Durbar Square, which was probably founded in the first half of the 12th century. However, renovations and added embellishments have given the building a very “Malla Style” appearance.

EARLY MALLA PERIOD

1200 TO 1382

The early Malla period is poorly documented, and very few structures remain. This can be attributed to the regular raiding, looting and sacking of the Valley by neighbouring kingdoms during the late 13th to the mid 14th centuries.



The first Malla ruler, Ari Malla, reigned from 1200 to 1216. However it is not known how he overcame the Licchavi and Thakuri rulers. The suggestion has been made that these Mallas were descendents of an ancient lineage mentioned in the Buddhist and Hindu scriptures; however the more likely version would be that the new kings adopted the name, which in Sanskrit means “wrestler” or “victor”.

LATE MALLA PERIOD 1382 TO 1768

It was only after 1382, when Sthiti Malla usurped power that some stability came to the Valley. Between 1484 and 1619, the three separate Malla city-states of Kathmandu, Lalitpur (Patan) and Bhaktapur emerged. These three states were

constantly feuding, until they were finally conquered by Pritivi Narayan Shah in the mid 18th century.

This period is often described as the ‘Golden Age’ for art, architecture and craftwork in the Valley. The Mallas developed the craft of constructing with bricks and wood to perfection. The buildings, whether temples, palaces or dwellings, are adapted to the climate, as well as having aesthetic finesse.

Competition between the three kingdoms resulted in the creation of the magnificent Durbar Squares, with the palaces and array of temples and shrines. The Malla kings became greatly influenced by Brahman scholars and gave increasing importance to Hindu deities such as Pashupati and Taleju. Consequently, the responsibility of tending to the major Buddhist shrines was taken over by the Tibetan immigrants.

EARLY SHAH PERIOD 1768 TO 1846

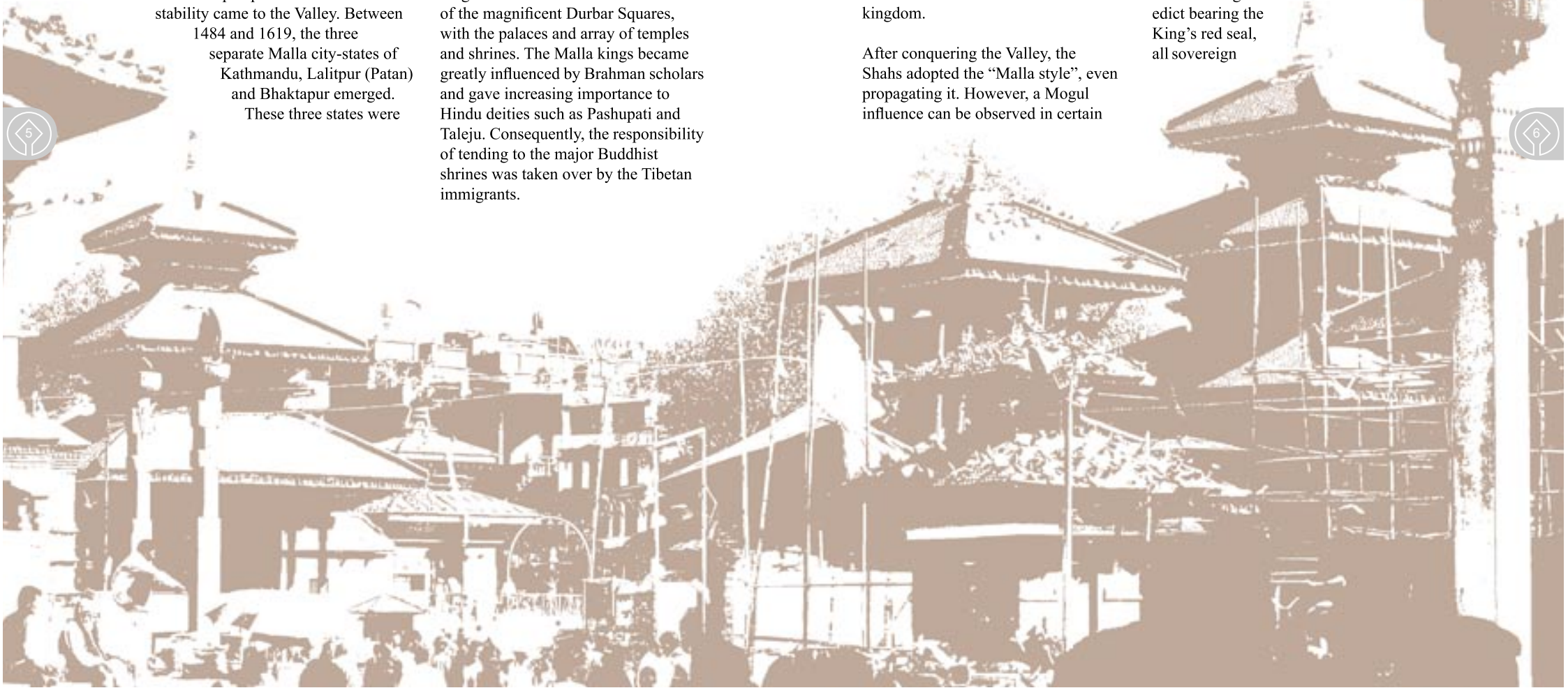
During the Indra Jatra festival in September 1768, the Gorkhali forces, led by Pritivi Narayan Shah, marched into Kathmandu. One year later, Patan and Bhaktapur were also under control of the Gorkhas. The military campaign had started as early as 1685 and continued till the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816. With the signing of this treaty, the present boundaries of the Kingdom of Nepal, with its capital in Kathmandu were defined and the Shah dynasty was installed as the rulers of the new kingdom.

After conquering the Valley, the Shahs adopted the “Malla style”, even propagating it. However, a Mogul influence can be observed in certain

buildings such as the extensions made to the Palace in Kathmandu, the Dharara tower and the old Bag Durbar built by Bhimsen Thapa. Even the “Malla style” private buildings underwent some change and adjustments with time, though a complete new style was not developed, nor introduced.

RANA RULE 1846 TO 1951

In 1846, Jung Bahadur Kunwar became Prime Minister when, during the Kot Massacre, most of his political rivals were slain. Through an edict bearing the King’s red seal, all sovereign





powers were wrested from the King. The position of Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief and the title of Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung became hereditary, the line of succession being reserved for the next oldest member of the Rana family.

In 1850, Jung Bahadur visited Europe, bringing back a taste for 19th-century European fashion. In contrast the period of Rana Rule is defined by the conscious isolation of the country from outside influence. This was clearly politically motivated, to consolidate their position within the country and to minimize interference from the neighbouring countries.

Inspired by Neo-classical Europe and the British colonial architecture in neighbouring India, the Ranas built white stucco palaces. With time, the dwellings took on their own 'Rana' style, either by copying decorative elements or reproducing miniature palaces.

The severe earthquake of 1934 recorded a magnitude 8.4 on the Richter scale and caused widespread devastation in the Valley. Several thousand people were killed and the majority of buildings were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. The post-disaster reconstruction effort was pursued in typical 'Rana' style, as can still be seen in the environs of New Road, Kathmandu.

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD 1951 TO PRESENT

King Tribhuvan regained his hereditary power from the Rana regime with the help of intellectuals in exile in

India, the opposition faction of the Ranas and the newly formed Indian government under Nehru. 1951 saw Nepal open its borders to the world, which allowed foreign aid to help develop infrastructure, and improve health and education. After a decade of experimenting with parliamentary democracy, King Mahendra dissolved the parliament on 15 December 1960. The party-less 'panchayat' system was introduced in 1962, which ended with the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990.

The stability of multi-party democracy was undermined after the massacre of a large part of the Royal Family on 1 June 2001 and the Maoist insurgency left the country in turmoil, leading to the dissolution of parliament. On 1 February 2005 King Gyanendra assumed absolute control of the country. The people of Nepal, however, felt differently and initiated the Janadolan II (democracy) movement in April 2006 which resulted in the reinstatement of parliament and the review of the constitution.

During the last half of the 20th century, Reinforced Cement Concrete brought about new possibilities, mainly constructing tall slender buildings. The trend of hereditary vertical division of properties has created smaller plots, and buildings tend to have 5-6 floors in stead of 3. Recently a new trend of pseudo-newari style buildings is emerging, instigated by building bylaws conceived to preserve the monument zones.



Kathmandu was once known as Kantipur, the 'city of lights', and is believed to have been founded by King Gunakamadeva. The Goddess Laxmi (goddess of wealth, light, wisdom and fortune) appeared to the king as he was worshipping, and told him to build a city at the junction of the Vishnumati and Bagmati rivers. The city was to be built in the shape of a sword in this sacred place. The king duly did what was requested and moved his court to Kathmandu from Patan. The modern capital of Nepal has developed considerably since then, but glimpses of its mystic past can be found around every corner.



Kasthamandapa



KASTHAMANDAPA

It is morning and the golden rays of the sun have lit up the streets. Dust settles over dust, the shopkeepers are unloading fresh supplies from gunnysacks, fruit sellers are displaying bananas and oranges; two dogs break into a fight. A rickshaw puller paddles by and pulls over, wipes the beads of sweat from his forehead with a swift movement of his hand, dismounts and rests against the wooden posts of Kasthamandapa to catch his breath.

Kasthamandapa is the best known and the oldest surviving ‘Mandapa’ in Kathmandu, and the city owes its name to the building. Its origin and exact age are unknown but the first reference to the structure is recorded in the 11th century. Legend has it that the Kasthamandapa was built from the wood of a single tree. Kalpavriksha, the heavenly tree who had come in human form to watch a festival in Kathmandu, was recognised and bound



Mandapa

Public rest houses have been a part of Nepalese history since the Licchavi period. 'Dharamshala' is the generic term for all types but they are also known as Sattal, Pati, Mandapa and Chapat. Sattals were built to give shelter to travelers and traders passing through the city. Traders from remote parts of Nepal would pay respects to Bhimsen, the patron God of all merchants (the temple of Bhimsen is on the road from Hanuman Dhoka to the Bishnumati river), and take refuge in these rest houses on their way to Tibet.

Sattal, Pati, Mandapa and Chapat all vary in style, layout and height. Pati are the smallest and most widely distributed of the resthouses. As well as providing shelter for travelers, they are used as community meeting places. Pati consist of a raised, covered platform which is either free-standing, incorporated into a residential house or attached to an existing building like a lean-to and named Dupat (a two cornered Pati). Sattal were used by both transient travelers and by gurus and Sadhus for longer stays. The sattal of Mandapa type is a square in form, single or several storied and serves many functions similar to those of a Pati, although it is designed primarily as a community reception hall. This type of Mandapa sattal is usually a free standing open pavilion, which allows for large gatherings of people in and around it.

in an inescapable spell by a tantric guru. The guru promised to break the spell only if Kalpavriksha agreed to provide wood to build a large house. Kalpavriksha was left with no choice but to donate part of his body to build Kasthamandapa. As the name suggests, it was originally built as a rest house, 'Mandapa' meaning pavilion.



Kasthamandapa, also known as Maru Sattal, is a built in the Mandapa style and stands on an elevated platform over 21 meters wide and the temple rises 19 meters tall. On the ground floor four colossal wooden posts support the roof. A stairway leads to the first floor and the top level can only be accessed by means of a ladder passing through a trapdoor in the ceiling. Traditional tiles cover the roofs and the unpainted wood has blackened with age. The Kasthamandapa has developed over the years, having been subjected to endless repairs and additions. Today, there is an image of Gorakhnath in the centre of the floor and sadhus, with their staves and rosaries, surround it in worship.

The area around Kasthamandapa is filled with small shops that have been amalgamated into the Durbar Square. **The Durbar Squares** are the historic cores of the three major towns within the Kathmandu Valley and are comprised of the former royal palaces and a series of important temples and shrines, linked together by an open public space. Two storied buildings with commercial premises on the ground floor line the perimeter. Amidst the shops four metal lions on each corner of the balconied top floor of a

Chatamari Chhe

To the left of Kasthamandapa, a crowded road leads to small local tea shops where typical Newari foods and drinks are served. Chatamari Chhe (Chatamari House) is one such eating joint popular with local youth who savor the local delicacies in an old Newari house with its traditional eating arrangement, i.e., sukul (straw mats) to sit on.



Garud Narayan

pavilion look out elegantly over the busy street. This is the **Singha Sattal** (Lion Pavilion). The ground floor shops are narrow cells that are small, but conceal a wealth of supplies. Wooden boxes on raised platforms store all kinds of spices. Cumin, pepper, tika powder (the brilliant red powder used in Hindu rituals), sweets and chaku (unrefined sugar made from the juice of sugar cane stalks) are all neatly stored in boxes. Apricots, cashews, pistachios, raisins and all sorts of dried fruits sit in glass jars upon the racks. Incense sticks, soap cakes, toothpaste, cigarettes and other curious looking objects are stacked together. Even local tonics, medicines for stomach aches and vitamins are proudly displayed behind glass cabinets. A middle-aged man sits on a low stool reading newspapers and adjusting his glasses. He is one of the shopkeepers. When

Guthis, traditionally all male socio-religious groups, were created to enhance the standard of living within communities and to perform varied functions. As the need to create the guthis was inspired by a religious spirit, they give prominent importance to religious activities. The income from guthi land financed the maintenance of monuments and the continued performance of rituals and ceremonies. Since most guthi land was nationalized in 1964 this traditional system of conservation has been compromised. The remaining guthis are those concerned with religious rituals rather than upkeep of the architectural fabric of Nepal.



asked about the red powders and barley he looks searchingly and answers, 'these are used in pujas and have been a custom for ages now'. The shops are rented out by the guthis and the Sattals were donated either by wealthy families or groups of individuals.

According to popular legend the Singha Sattal was built from the wood that was left over from Kalpavriksha, the tree from which the Kashthamandapa was built. The top storey bears a gilded image of Vishnu on a Garuda. A few paces away from Singha Sattal is the 16th century Laxmi Narayan Sattal. Unlike other rest houses, **Lakshmi Narayan Sattal** or **Kabindrapur** was built for groups who stayed for longer periods rather than for travelers who were passing through the city. The ground floor, which is raised on



Sattal

The Cosmic Dancer

Shiva, the God of Destruction, is also known as Nataraja, the Lord of Dancers (Nasa Dyo in Newari). The Dancing Shiva is the manifestation of eternal energy since dancing is an act of creation. Shiva dances on the body of the dwarf Apasmara Purusha who symbolises ignorance. Ignorance can be annihilated by knowledge which frees man from the shackles of existence. The Dancing Shiva is the manifestation of energy in its five activities:

1. Creation
2. Maintenance
3. Destruction
4. Concealment
5. Favour.



Singha Sattal

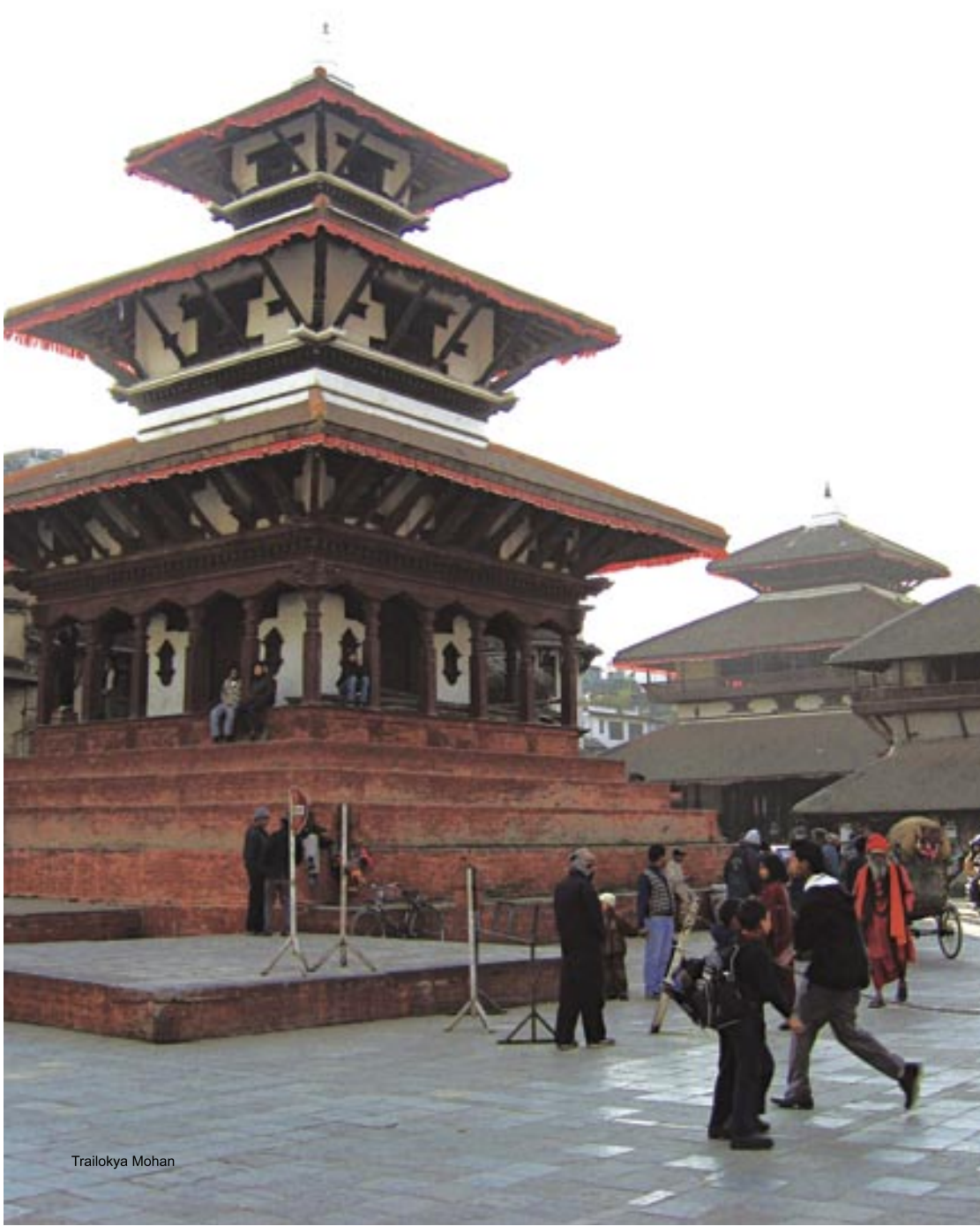


Kabindrapur

a platform, has rooms and a verandah that is open on all sides. Narayan or Vishnu, and Laxmi were added later to the north wall.



View of Durbar Square



Trailokya Mohan

In Nepal, religion shapes society and is deeply engrained in the social fabric of the city. A life without religion cannot be imagined: it seeps into all the activities that are needed to make up a complete day. There is a hierarchy of Gods, each with different powers and purposes. This intricate picture is further complicated by the almost non-existent line between Hinduism and Buddhism. In certain cases one cannot be differentiated from the other, particularly within the Newar community of Nepal. In a kingdom with so many Gods and Goddesses it is only natural that there are so many temples, shrines and images.

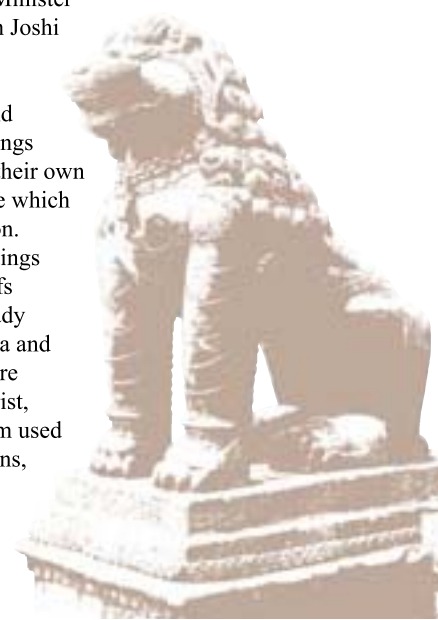
The **Trailokya Mohan Temple** is dedicated to Vishnu. Trailokya Mohan means 'Vishnu of the Three Worlds'. Vishnu is the Protector God and is part of the Hindu Trinity (Shiva–Vishnu–Brahma). The rivalry between Gods and demons is an age-old struggle. Whenever the demons overpowered the world of men, Vishnu would descend

from heaven and help drive the demons away. The Trailokya Mohan temple stands on a five-stage brick plinth next to the Laxmi Narayan Sattal. It was established by Parthivendra Malla in 1679 and is also known as Dasavatar temple (Ten Incarnations). Dance troupes gather around it to perform dances illustrating the ten incarnations of Vishnu during the Indra Jatra (see page 93). Wooden images of the ten incarnations are beautifully carved on the struts of the temple. They are: Matsya (fish), Kurma (tortoise), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (Man-Lion), Vamana (dwarf), Parasurama, Dasharathama, Krishna, the Buddha and Kalki, which is yet to come.

A large stone Garuda carved from a single piece of stone kneels at the base of the brick plinth. Hindu deities are often accompanied by mounts or vehicles and the Garuda (with the head and wings of an eagle and usually the body of a man), the King of birds, is Vishnu's vehicle. This stone version was installed by Queen Riddhi Laxmi and her Chief Minister Laxmi Narayan Joshi in 1689.

The temples and religious buildings of Nepal have their own distinctive style which eludes definition. Although buildings with tiered roofs (pagodas) already existed in China and India well before the time of Christ, 'pagoda', a term used by the Europeans,

Pratap Malla, who ruled from 1641-1674, made huge contributions to the palace and the Durbar square. He was fascinated by art, poetry, music and dances. On the pedestal of the Hanuman image he is identified as 'King of Kings, Chief of Nepal, extremely clever, Chief of all Kings, Twice Illustrious Great King, Poet Laureate, Enthroned Lord Jaya Pratap Malla.' [Michael Hutt]. Kavindrapur Sattal, a four storied building which houses the shrine of Nasa Dyo (Dancing Shiva) was founded by Pratap Malla who held the title 'Kavindra' which means the 'Lord of Poets'.







Shiva Parvati Temple

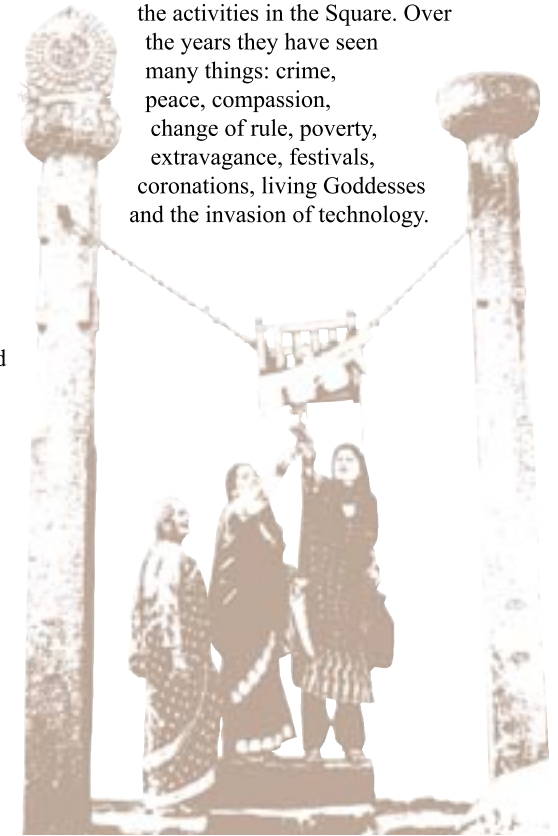
seems to be too broad to describe school of architecture unique to Nepal. Mandir (Nepali) or Dega (Newari) are the terms used by the Nepalese.

Dominating the centre of the square is the **Maju Dega**, a huge temple on a nine-stage brick plinth. Although the Degas are usually named after the Gods for whom they are built this temple is curiously named Maju Dega or 'mother-in-laws temple'. The brick plinth is six meters tall and the temple proper measures over seventeen meters. The plinths are wide and spacious and are a haven for the idle and the tired. A steep stone stairway leads to the main entrance. The importance of each Dega depends on the status and powers of the Gods that inhabit it, and they are visited for different reasons. Since there are Gods for toothache, marriage, death, epidemics, the old, the young and for wives, each Dega has its own special importance. The Maju Dega is a temple dedicated to Shiva and was built by Queen Riddhi Laxmi in the year 1690. A large Shiva Lingam serves as the central shrine. As the God of Destruction people fear Shiva and it is believed that if he is disturbed the opening of the third eye will end all civilization. Despite this fearful image Shiva has become very popular. His long dreadlocks, tiger skin and attitude have turned him into the coolest, most accepted and revered God, especially for the younger generation. He is also said to be the lord of the medicinal herb. The 'grass' is always greener on his side,

which explains why songs have been written about him by some of Nepal's rock heavyweights.

Legend has it that Lord Shiva, tired of meditating in the mountains, descended into the valley to enjoy the divine dances that were being held in Kathmandu Durbar square. He relished the performances being a dancer himself. After several visits even Parvati, Shiva's consort, showed signs of interest so he invited her to accompany him. They began to visit the square together. A house for Shiva and Parvati was constructed during the reign of Ran Bahadur Shah to the left of the Maju Dega.

Shiva and Parvati's wooden manikins lean on the windowsill of the **Shiva Parvati Temple** and watch over the activities in the Square. Over the years they have seen many things: crime, peace, compassion, change of rule, poverty, extravagance, festivals, coronations, living Goddesses and the invasion of technology.



Today, they watch over a group of men in dirty clothes playing a game of ludo. The bystanders are straining their necks to watch and listen to the sound of the plastic dice being rolled over hard-worn cardboard to reveal that sacred number 'six'. Women and children sit on the stone steps below Shiva and Parvati, peeling oranges and enjoying the afternoon sun. Small children hop from one brick plinth to the other of the Maju Dega, dust caked and disheveled. An old man looks around for his stick. Beautiful masks and enigmatic jewellery hang from the walls of the shop next to the temple. A tourist shoots with his camera as school children in white shirts with blue ties thrown over their shoulders walk by hand in hand. And above them all Shiva and Parvati rest on their elbows to witness the ephemeral splendour of the afternoon.





Kumari Ghar



KUMARI

During the reign of Jayaprakash Malla, a prepubescent virgin shakya girl (from the goldsmith community) claimed to be possessed by the spirit of Goddess Bhawani. The news reached the King, who thought that the girl was an impostor and banished her; moments later the queen had convulsions and became delirious. The King was horrified and made an extensive search for the girl he had banished. Eventually she was found and from that moment on, was worshipped as 'Kumari', or Living Goddess.

The practice of worshipping a virgin girl as a manifestation of the Goddess Taleju is not unique to Kathmandu. It has deep roots in India and can be traced to the 13th century, but in Nepal the goddess continues to live in the body of virgin girls. Kumari holds a very important position here and if she is displeased it can prove to be calamitous for the country. Great pains are taken to select the perfect girl, in whose body the spirit will choose to reside. She must hail from the shakya clan and her family background must be flawless. She must have all the 32 'lakchins' or attributes of perfection. Her skin must be immaculate and unblemished and her hair and eyes very black. Her body should be sturdy, her thighs like those of a deer, her neck like that of a duck or like a conch shell and her voice should be crystal clear.



Kumari Ghar

If the spirit of taleju is to reside in her body the little girl must not be repelled or nauseated at the sight of blood. To make sure that she is fearless she is thrown into a dark room containing decapitated buffalo heads covered with blood. It is said that people wearing hideous masks dance and romp around trying to scare the child. If the girl shows any signs of fear she is disqualified and the search for a new candidate begins. However, if she comes out of the room unmoved and unchanged, she is considered and tantric rituals follow. The spirit of the taleju which has been wandering during the period of selection is planted into the body of the new Kumari.

The attendants take special care of the little girl because she cannot afford to fall and risk a cut. Loosing a single drop of blood could drive away the spirit of the taleju. Under normal circumstances, her days in the god-house come to an end with her first menstruation, when she changes back to the status of mere mortal and the search for a new Kumari begins.

After being treated as a Goddess for several years and living far from the din of daily life it is naturally extremely difficult to cope with the outside world. Perhaps it is for this reason that stepping aside for the next successor has been visibly upsetting for some former Kumaris, who have continued their pious ways and refused any contact with outsiders. Over the years, the circumstances in which Kumari lives has changed and the little Goddess is now allowed contact with a restricted number of family and friends and limited education. There has been a state declaration stating that former Kumaris are free to marry, should they wish to. Interestingly, this was prompted by speculation on the issue generated by the first Nepali color feature film "Kumari".

If the life of the Kumari has progressed a little over the years, the tradition and the house of the living goddess have not. She continues to reside in the **Kumari Ghar**, which was founded by King Jayaprakash Malla in 1756. The door to the house of the Living Goddess is guarded by two stone lions and the façade bears three rows of windows. The windows are arranged symmetrically and the struts are adorned with carvings of nagas (snakes). The door opens into a small courtyard and the windows have wooden toranas, a semi-circle of wood or stone marking the gateway leading to a temple or a holy place of worship.

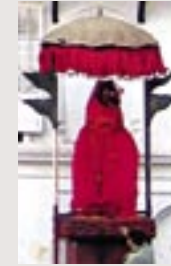
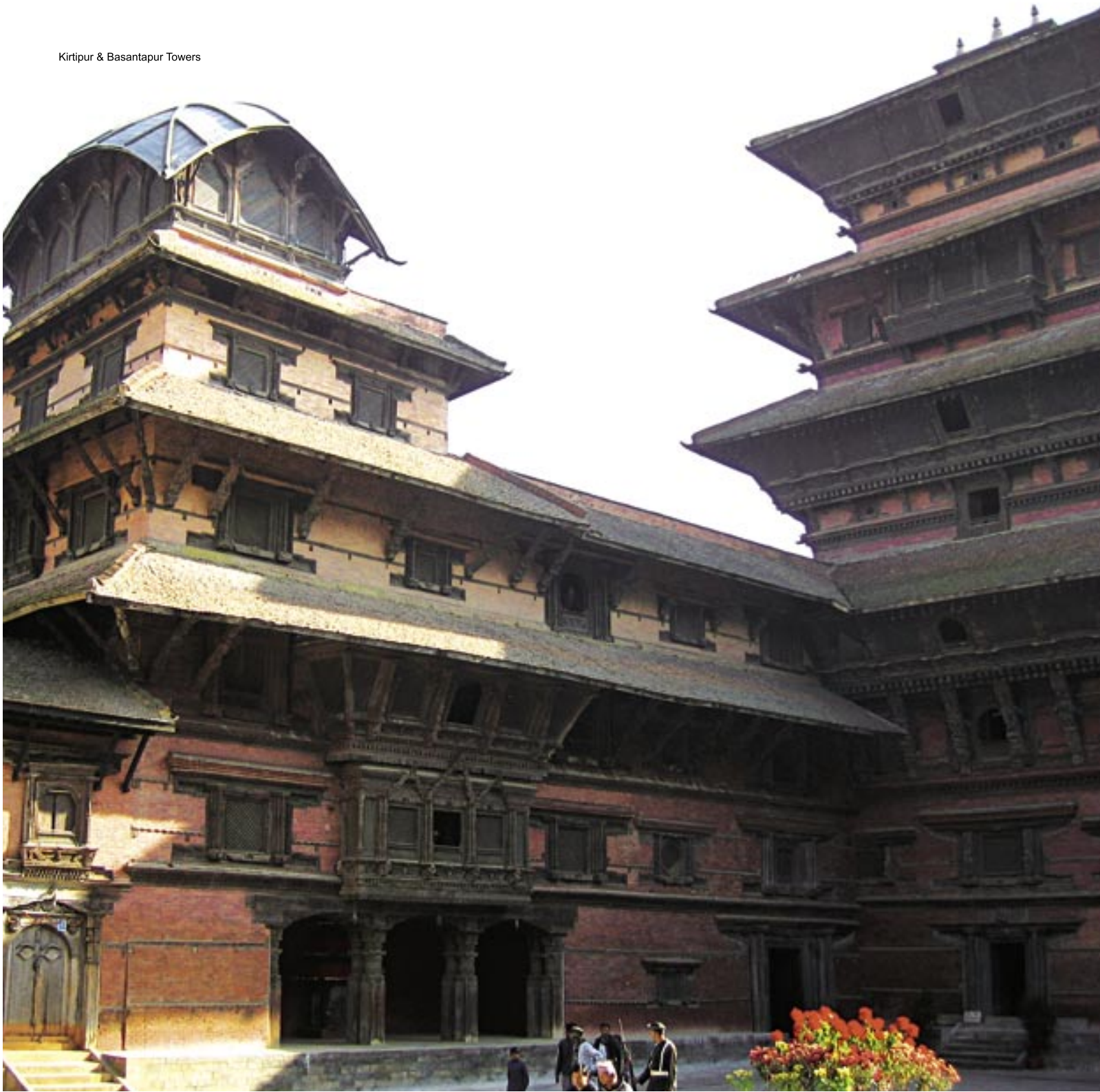
Kumari lives two stories above and occasionally gives audience to tourists from the Kumari Jhyal (window). Only Hindus are allowed to enter the house. A narrow staircase leads to the upper storey where Kumari is surrounded by attendants, away from her previous life, cocooned in her house in the Durbar Square. The first long corridor of this floor is where Kumari awaits her loyal devotees. Here, in her regal chair, she blesses them with her hand while they pay their respects and offer a token amount of money. She does not speak to any of the devotees.



Hanuman Dhoka

HANUMAN DHOKA PALACE

The Hanuman Dhoka Palace is centuries old: scholars believe that the building already existed in the 7th century. The Mallas, Shahs and Ranas have all contributed to the construction of the complex by adding sections to the existing buildings. The Newars call the royal complex 'Layaku' (from the Sanskrit term Rajakula or royal palace) but it is popularly known as **Hanuman Dhoka**.



Hanuman, the Monkey-God, is known for his legendary superhuman strength. In the great Hindu epic Ramayana, Hanuman helped

Prince Ram Chandra to defeat the ten headed demon Ravana. Stories of Hanuman's agility and devotion to Ram have been passed down from father to child. Hanuman is said to have carried an entire hill to save Laxman, Ram's brother who had been mortally wounded in battle. He had to supply the invalid with a crucial life saving herb from the Himalayas. He searched for it but could not find it. Eventually, he plucked up the whole mountain and brought it back to Ram and Laxman. Agility, speed and his ability to fly made him an invaluable ally.

A large image of Hanuman kneeling on a two meter high pillar guards the golden gateway to the palace, which is known as Hanuman Dhoka, and gives the complex its popular name. The Mallas revered Hanuman because they claimed descent from Ram Chandra. These days the vermilion stained image has lost its features and is draped in scarlet garments. Over his head there is a red parasol which shades him from the sun. Tourist guides like to reveal that the cloth is thrown over Hanuman's eyes so that the erotic scenes carved on the nearby Jagannath temple do not distract him.







The story of **Narasingh**,
The Man-Lion Incarnation

Hiranyakasipu, a demon who had obtained several gifts from Brahma, was harassing the Gods. One of the gifts had made him invincible as he could neither be killed by man nor beast, neither during the day nor at night, neither inside a house nor outside and no weapon could wound or injure him. Thus Brahma was helpless when Hiranyakasipu became a nuisance and the Gods turned to Vishnu (Protector God). Hiranyakasipu had a son who worshipped Vishnu, enraging his father with his devotion. When Hiranyakasipu questioned his son about Vishnu's abilities the God burst upon the scene in his half-man half-lion (Narasingh) incarnation. It was twilight; Narasingh grasped Hiranyakasipu and split his belly open with his claws, whilst sitting on the threshold of the demon's palace.

The main entrance to the palace is traditionally guarded by fierce tiger riders made of stone. Today, armed soldiers frisk the visitors who are only allowed inside after purchasing a ticket for a small fee. The beautiful gate was built by King Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah. Pratap Malla playing a lute, Krishna with his Gopinis (faithful female devotees of the cowherd clan), Vishnu Vishvarupa and other painted wooden figures appear on a niche above the golden gateway. The gate opens into the northwest corner of Nasal Chowk. Upon stepping into Nasal Chowk one comes across a dramatic stone image of Narasingh, which was installed by Pratap Malla in 1673.

Legend has it that King Pratap Malla had dressed up and danced publicly as Vishnu. The God was infuriated by the King's act and laid a curse causing him to dance forever. The King repented and promised to install an image of the God that would lift the curse, and the image remains standing to this day.



Sisa Baithak

The **Nasal Chowk** is a large open courtyard with the Sisa Baithak at the north end. The **Sisa Baithak** used to function as an audience chamber during the reign of the Malla Kings. The ground floor is an open verandah which stretches from one end of the construction to the other. A throne sits

here, covered with white sheets and newar boys from the priestly caste offer betel and betel nuts (Pan and Supari). Huge portraits of Shah Kings adorn the walls.

The **Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple**, which is located in Mohan Chowk, can be viewed from Nasal Chowk. This temple stands out from the others because of its circular tiered roofs. It dates from about 1650 and is closed to visitors, as is Mohan Chowk. The image of the five-faced Hanuman inside the temple is only open to priests who perform the rituals.

In the centre of Nasal Chowk is a platform that is known as the dabali. It was on this platform that dances were performed by various troupes during the Malla period. Today, it has become the spot where the coronation takes place. Next to the platform stands a soldier in traditional uniform with a musket by his side. Nasal Chowk was named after Nasal Devta (Dancing Shiva), which explains why Jyapus (Newari farmers) still come here to pay respects to the God when they begin their music lessons.

The buildings surrounding **Basantapur Chowk** and part of the Nasal Chowk have been transformed into the **H.M. King Tribhuvan Memorial Museum**. Basantapur Chowk is the courtyard of the 'four towers': Basantapur tower, Kirtipur tower, Lalitpur tower and Bhaktapur tower, and was used by the Shah Kings as their family quarters. All of the towers rise from the four storied buildings below. The quadrangle was built by Prithvi Narayan Shah and Pratap Shah but only the former's



Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple



Stone Lion at entrance of Hanuman Dhoka

nine storey Basantapur tower is open to visitors. The long climb to the top takes one through dark corridors with latticed windows and narrow wooden staircases. The top floor is relatively spacious and the view from its slanting windows is exhilarating. This is the only place from where one can get fleeting glimpses of the inner courtyards, which are otherwise inaccessible. The roof of the tower is supported by struts which have images of Hindu deities carved upon them. The Kirtipur tower is different from the others as its roof is made of copper and 'resembles the hull of an upturned boat' (Michael Hutt).

The **Bhandarkhal**, or treasury garden, contains a large pool with an image of Vishnu sleeping on Shesha Naga (Snake-King with thousands of hoods). Legend has it that a whole mountain, Shivapuri, crumbled to the ground during an earthquake. Years later, a farmer was plowing a field where the mountain had once stood. Suddenly, his plough hit something hard and blood oozed from the earth. Terrified and gasping for breath he cleared the soil to find a huge statue of Vishnu reclining on Shesha Naga. As he dug deeper he realised that the statue had been floating on water.

The statue was of Vishnu but it was strangely given the name 'Budhanilkantha' suggesting Shiva. This name originated when the Gods and Asuras (demons) agreed to churn the sea of milk in order to extract amrita (the elixir of life). They used the mountain Mandara as the churning stick and Vasuki, the serpent king as the churning rope. When the churning

began, Vasuki inadvertently vomited poison. Shiva saw the poison pouring out from Vasuki's mouth and rushed forward to swallow it to prevent the entire ocean from being contaminated. Parvati caught Shiva's neck to stop the poison from entering his body. The poison remained in Shiva's neck and turned blue, hence Shiva is referred to as Nilkantha (Blue neck). Many years later King Pratap Malla is said to have had a vision. In his dream he saw that if the rulers were to set eyes upon the image of the reclining Vishnu they would die. Nepalese rulers have not risked testing this story, and continue to refrain from visiting the famous statue. The vamshavali, a historical and genealogical text detailing the succession and pious acts of kings, states that a replica of the original Vishnu was brought to the Hanuman Dhoka palace by Pratap Malla.

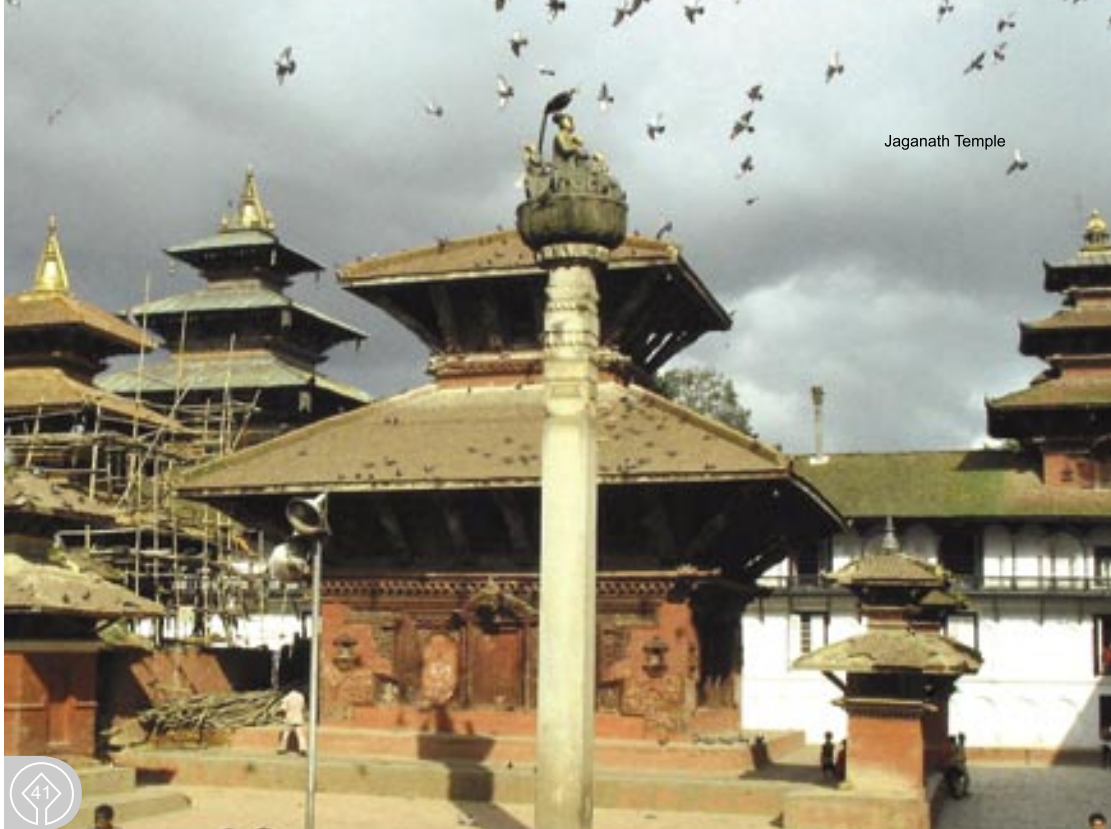
Sundari Chowk or 'beautiful courtyard' is famous for the golden waterspout and a stone sculpture known as Kaliyadamana.

Naga Pokhari (Snake pond), as the name suggests, is a pond from where a wooden post rises with the hooded naga head cast in metal. Pratap Malla transported it from Bhaktapur in 1630.

Pratap Malla built Mohan Chowk in 1649 and this part of the palace was used by the Malla Kings as their family quarters. In the centre of the courtyard there is a bathing pool complete with a golden waterspout and images of the sage Bhagiratha. The courtyard is filled with wooden images of Krishna, eight Mother-Goddesses and others of ambiguous meaning.

It is believed that Malla Kings were cremated in Kanhehol or Masan Chowk (Funeral Courtyard). The Bhagavati temple rises from the roofs of the Kanhehol Chowk and people often fail to notice it as it does not stand alone. The temple originally had a Narayan image but this was stolen and replaced by an image of Bhagavati.





JAGANNATH TEMPLE

The erotic carvings on the struts of the Jagannath Temple have never failed to spring surprises to the unprepared visitor. Built in 1563 by Mahendra Malla as a temple dedicated to Vishnu, it strangely derives its name from the images of Krishna (Jagannath).

Temples are sacred, divine, pure and holy. To have carved erotic scenes across the struts could be considered desecration. It is not surprising then, that this building is at the centre of numerous tales that attempt to explain the remarkable decorative motifs. Some

believe that these **erotic scenes** were carved to protect the temple from being struck by lightning. According to this school of thought, lightning is a virgin and the erotic carvings and obscene bestial scenes help to drive her away as she views such subjects with utter disgust. The most commonly accepted explanation is that the scenes relate to the mysterious world of **Hindu and Vajrayanic tantra practices**. Tantra can be summarized as the Asian body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the universe is purely the physical manifestation of divine energy, seeks to ritually channel

that energy in creative ways. Common variations include visualizing the deity in the act of sexual union, visualizing oneself as the deity and acts such as the consumption of meat or alcohol. Occasionally, ritualized or 'non-standard' sex may be performed, which accounts for tantra's occasionally negative reputation in parts of the Western world (White, David Gordon, 2000. *Tantra in Practice*. Princeton University Press). Another possibility is that these scenes represent a secret code. Imagine an ancient version of Morse Code, which had erotic scenes for its characters rather than dots and dashes.

Still others draw explanations from ancient texts like the Mahabharatha. **Alambusa** had led a life of sin and in order to repent she went to the hills to meditate. She meditated with so much sincerity that Shiva was pleased and appeared before her. Shiva told her that any wish she asked for would be granted. Alambusa promptly asked for a special power that would enable her to destroy her enemies by spitting on them. The gift was granted and Alambusa grew famous because of her extensive powers of destruction. Duryodhana, who was at war with the Pandavas, asked Alambusa to join his forces. During the battle Alambusa turned towards Arjun but Krishna, who realised the gravity of the situation, asked Hanuman to shed his clothes and stand in front of her. Alambusa turned away in disgust and blindly spat on Duryodhana's forces reducing a good many of them to dust. She was embarrassed by her mistake and when she realised that it was Krishna's fault she vowed to destroy temples



Kal Bhairav Shrine



or shrines dedicated to Krishna. The erotic carvings on the temples are supposed to keep Alambusa at bay.

The real reasons behind the erotic scenes are as mysterious as the **Kal Bhairav**, who stands a few paces away from the Jagannath temple. Wearing a crown imbedded with skulls and a garland made of the same, the six armed Bhairav looks like a figure with an appetite for destruction. With earrings of snake, his hands clutching severed heads and the body of a demon at his feet the domineering figure of Bhairav commands awe and respect. No one knows about its origins, as it was unearthed from a construction site during the reign of Pratap Malla. People rarely pass by the Kal Bhairav without paying respects. Women and children take time to give the vermilion stained deity his due. The Kal Bhairav was once known as Adalat Bhairav. Liars, frauds and thieves were brought before him so that they would be forced to tell the truth. Anybody who lied before the Bhairav is said to die immediately, vomiting blood.

People say that the Bhairav was trapped and imprisoned against his will after coming to Kathmandu from India to watch the festivals. Somehow people recognised the drifter who came by to watch the festivals and immediately bound him with spells. Bhairav, who could not break the spell, started sinking deeper into the earth as it was the only way he could escape. The people saw through his plans and before he disappeared completely beneath the surface, they beheaded him and enshrined the skull. Bhairav has been worshipped ever since.



Kageshvar Temple

The architecture of the **Kageshvar Temple** combines two different styles. The lower storey is built in a distinctive Newar style but the upper storey is completely different and is built in the shikhara style. This temple was built by Queen Bhuvanlalaxmi in 1711.

The **Kotilingeshvar Temple** was built by Mahendra Malla and is probably the oldest specimen of a **shikhara style** temple in Kathmandu. The style developed during the 6th century in India. Its buildings feature tall curvilinear or pyramidal towers, from which it derives its name as the tapering towers that look like mountain peaks. Shikhara temples are usually constructed on an elevated plinth. The tower may have a disc called the amalaka which supports the finial. The Kotilingeshvar temple has a chaturmukha (four faced) lingam which is the central shrine.



Indrapur was founded by Pratap Malla in the 17th century and is dedicated to Shiva. It is a two storied building and the struts which support the roof are plain. An image of Indra is brought here during the Indra Jatra and installed in the upper storey. The Vishnu temple near Indrapur was built by Pratap Malla in 1667. It is a three tiered temple and has a four stage plinth. Wooden images of Vaishnav deities are carved on the roof struts and there are figures at their bases. Interestingly, almost all the figures at the base of the roof struts are ordinary women from day to day life and not divine goddesses.

The **Mahavishnu Temple** was destroyed in the 1934 earthquake and subsequently underwent major restoration. It is a two tiered temple built by Jagajaya Malla in memory of his son, Rajendra Malla. The main image was that of a golden Vishnu and Laxmi but it was removed and kept in the Nasal Chowk after the Earthquake.

The **Mahendreshvar temple** was built by Mahendra Malla in 1562 as a substitute for Pashupati temple. The entrance to the shrine, which houses a chaturmukhi shiva lingam, is protected by stone lions. The roof struts have images of a Shiva deity.





SWET BHAIRAV

The Indra Jatra is a tribute to Indra, the rain god, to thank him for the rains and for a good harvest (see Page 93). The festival lasts for eight days and coincides with the festival of Kumari. Indra Jatra attracts people from all over Nepal who gather at the Durbar square on specific days.

Dance troupes perform, people dress in traditional costume and there is a spectacular display of exquisite masks. Singing, dancing, rejoicing and feasting are all part of the festival. This is the only day when the mask of the **Swet Bhairav** is open to the people; the rest of the year the mask hides



Indra Jatra Festival

window. It was installed in 1795 by Ran Bahadur Shah. Legend has it that King Yalambar went to the battle of Mahabharata wearing the mask. On the battlefield, Yalambar decided to help the losing side and Krishna, who thought that Yalambar as an ally of the

Kauravas, severed Yalambar's head with his discus causing it to land in Kathmandu.

During the Indra Jatra, people crowd around the mask of the Bhairav so that they can drink the blessed liquor that

flows from its mouth. The liquor flows by means of a small pipe and people push and fight to drink the celestial spirit. Luck and good fortune might help them to catch a live fish while drinking from the Bhairav's mouth. The fish is considered to be extremely

lucky and it brings great blessings. On the last day of the Indra Jatra and Kumari festival, the King himself comes to the Durbar Square to receive blessings from the Living Goddess.



THE KOT MASSACRE



In the heat of the mid-day sun the Kot looks detached from reality contrasted against the crowded square where people from all walks of life mingle. Porters with cigarettes stuck in their puckered lips squat around the stone Garuda just a few paces away. As an army outpost, the public is not allowed inside the Kot.

However peaceful it looks today its reputation may never recover from the shocking massacre that took place inside its walls a hundred and fifty years ago, and paved the way for the dictatorship of the Prime Ministers.

The country was wallowing in a mire of confusion and conspiracy when Mathabar Singh Thapa became the Prime Minister on the 26th of December, 1843. During this period three people simultaneously exercised royal authority; King Rajendra Bikram Shah, Junior Queen Rajyalaxmi Devi and Crown Prince Surendra Bikram Shah. Each of them had their own agenda and supporting factions and there was little hope of the situation resolving itself peacefully. The three leading families of the time; the Thapas, the Pandes and the Basnyats were also subject to relentless infighting and shifting allegiances in the battle for power. When Mathabar Singh Thapa assumed Mukhtiyarship the court atmosphere was filled with distrust and his young nephew, Jang Bahadur, was maneuvering to obtain a powerful commission in the army in order to come into the confidence of the Junior Queen, Rajyalaxmi Devi.

On the 17th of May, the Prime Minister was summoned to the palace on the pretext that the Queen had fallen ill. Always a confident man, Mathabar made the journey to the palace alone, where he was asked to wait in the courtyard. After a short while, a maid appeared and invited him to proceed upstairs. When he entered the room, King Rajendra was lying on a bed with Queen Rajyalakshmi seated at his feet. Unknown to Mathabar, Jang Bahadur waited behind the door with a loaded shooting iron. A bullet through the head and two more to the body and Mathabar slumped to the floor.

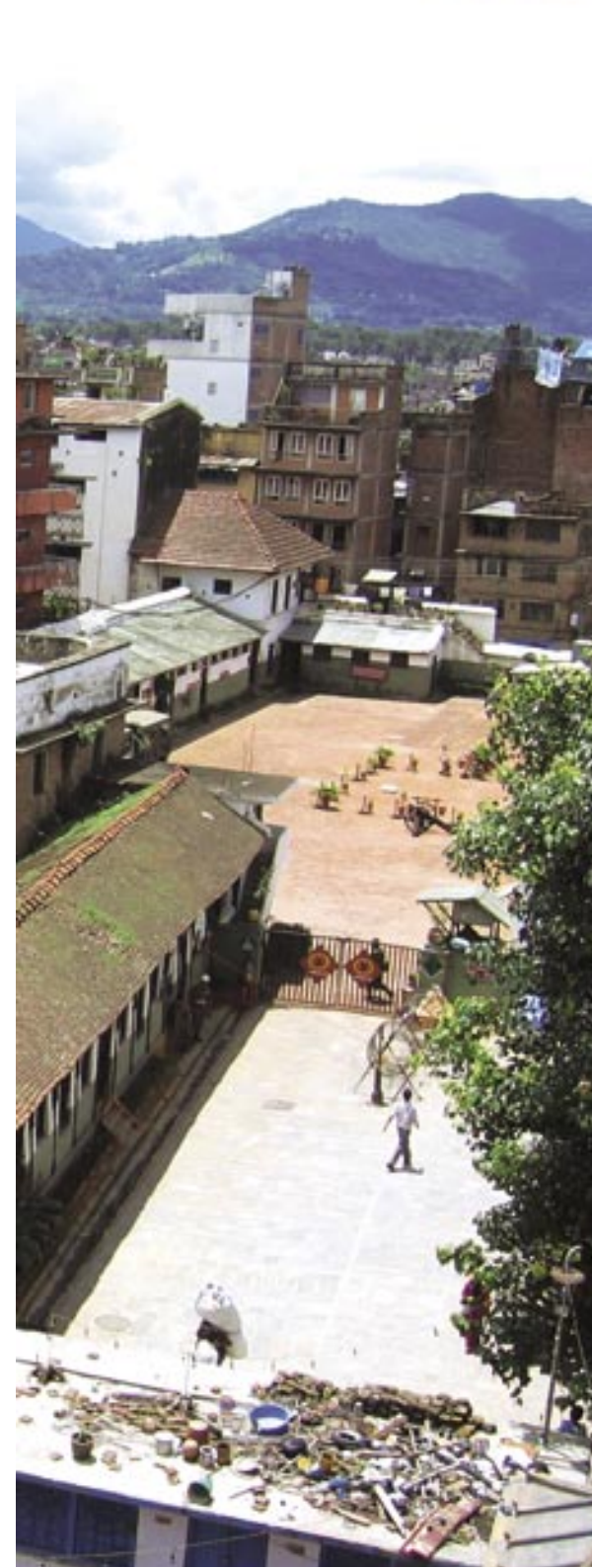
After Mathabar Singh's death a coalition government was formed with

Chautara Fatte Jang Shah as Prime Minister and Abhiman Singh Basnyat, Gagan Singh, Kazi Dalabhanjan Gora Pande and Jang Bahadur holding prominent positions. Gagan Singh, as the Queen's favoured confidante, was given charge of seven army regiments and the other generals just three. Along with the power his position as royal favourite bought, it also provoked the envy of his colleagues and Gagan Singh was assassinated on the 14th of September, 1846. The news of the General's murder found its way to the Queen, who became hysterical and stormed across the Kot, sword in hand, to the late General's house. All the officials were summoned and there were messengers running in all directions. During this chaotic period **Jang Bahadur**, along with his brothers, were the first to arrive.

Meanwhile General Abhiman Singh Basnyat had brought the King to the Kot, where a large number of state officials had already gathered. The Queen, somewhere in the second storey of the armoury building, was talking loudly. She wanted the murderer severely punished and nothing less than death would abate her fury. Her Royal Highness suspected Bir Kishore Gora Pande and asked Abhiman Singh to arrest him. Whilst under interrogation Bir Kishore denied having anything to do with the assassination. When the Queen realised that Bir Kishore would never confess, she asked Abhiman Singh Basnyat to chop his head off. Abhiman was shocked by this request and turned to the King for help. The King suggested a trial which further enraged his Queen as she wanted Bir Kishore to be punished immediately.

However, the trial had to wait for the arrival of the Prime Minister, who the King slipped off to find. He did not return.

When Fatte Jang finally arrived at Kot the Queen was raving like a mad woman. She wanted the name of the murderer and when she was not satisfied she rushed towards Bir Kishore Pande with a sword in her hand. Fatte Jang and others stopped her in her tracks and a heated discussion followed. The Queen went upstairs and as Fatte Jang, Abhiman Singh Basnyat and Bir Kishore followed her, the shots rang out: Gora Pande slumped on the stairs and Abhiman Singh Basnyat was wounded. Drawing himself up with great effort Abhiman made his way to the main gate in an attempt to flee. From nowhere Krishna Bahadur appeared and, with a swift movement, sliced through General Abhiman Singh's body. Khadga Bikram, who had learned about his father's death, searched the place for a sword but could only find a khukuri (traditional Nepali knife). Unsheathing the khukuri Khadga Bikram threw himself at Bam Bahadur. Within moments the Kot had degenerated into a bloodbath; swords had been drawn; khukuri's were brandished and bodies were lying everywhere. In the confusion, someone shot Khadga Bikram dead and a little later Jang Bahadur's troops marched in to add to the bloodshed. The troops fired and bayoneted till most of the officers were dead. No one knows how many people died that night.







TALEJU TEMPLE



An old man is sitting on a stone watching the Taleju Temple. His face is lined with wrinkles and his coat is torn. He seems to be as old as the monuments. No one knows where he lives or where he comes from. He is here to spend the afternoon at the Durbar Square, as he has done for years. When asked about the Taleju Temple he looks meditatively and says, “there are many legends about this temple but the one that fascinates me the most is about a game of dice. It is believed that King Jaya Prakash Malla used to play dice with the Goddess Taleju. She would sit for hours with him playing dice and advising him

on the matters of the state.” He stops, breathes in the dusty air and his fingers fumble in his pocket. After some shuffling he takes out a cigarette and lights it. Cigarette lit and the smoke drawn in he begins once again. “The Goddess used to come to him because she had been pleased with his devotion to her. The games continued day after day but came to an abrupt end one unfortunate morning. Apparently the King had cast furtive glances at the Goddess and admired her beauty, looking upon her lustfully. The Goddess was furious and cursed him. She foreshadowed the end of his reign and his dynasty. The King repented

and asked her if she could give him one last chance. The Goddess told him that the only way out was to worship a young Newari girl in whose body the spirit of the Goddess would reside” (see page 28).

A crowd has gathered near by. A motorbike has collided with a bicycle and a heated exchange follows. The moment has passed, the stone is empty and a cigarette stub is lying a few paces away. The old man has disappeared amongst the crowd.

Conspicuous in the skyline is the **Taleju Temple**, which is 25 metres high and stands on a 12 stage brick plinth. It was built by Mahendra Malla in 1564 who decreed that no other building was permitted to rise

higher. This rule effectively imposed a **building code** in Kathmandu and helped maintain the harmonious low-level development. Sadly it is not been followed so diligently in recent years. The temple is closed to visitors and is only open for Hindus and Buddhists during the Indra Jatra (see page 93). The entrance is guarded by two 6 foot stone lions. Taleju Bhawani is actually a Goddess from India who was brought to Nepal by Harsingh Deva when he was fleeing his kingdom to escape the wrath of the invading Mughals. After the marauders left, Harsingh Deva returned to his kingdom leaving the Goddess behind as a gift. The Malla kings made many additions such as the stone columns and flags. Pratap Malla and Bhaskara Malla added two bells in 1564 and 1714 respectively. The Taleju temple can only be properly viewed from the Taleju café.

One of the oldest temples in the Durbar Square is the **Tana Deval**.

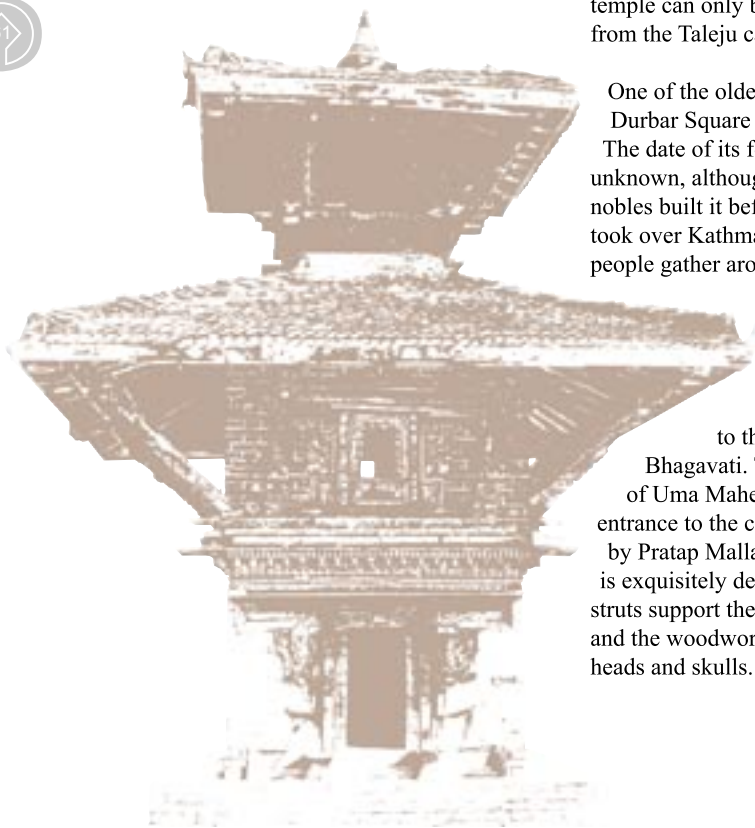
The date of its foundation is unknown, although it is likely that nobles built it before Ratna Malla took over Kathmandu in 1482. Today, people gather around the temple to

play cards and chess on little tables.

The Tana Deval is a single storied building dedicated

to the Goddess

Bhagavati. The stone sculpture of Uma Maheshvar which faces the entrance to the courtyard was installed by Pratap Malla in 1674. The façade is exquisitely decorated. 13 carved struts support the roof of the temple and the woodwork includes human heads and skulls.

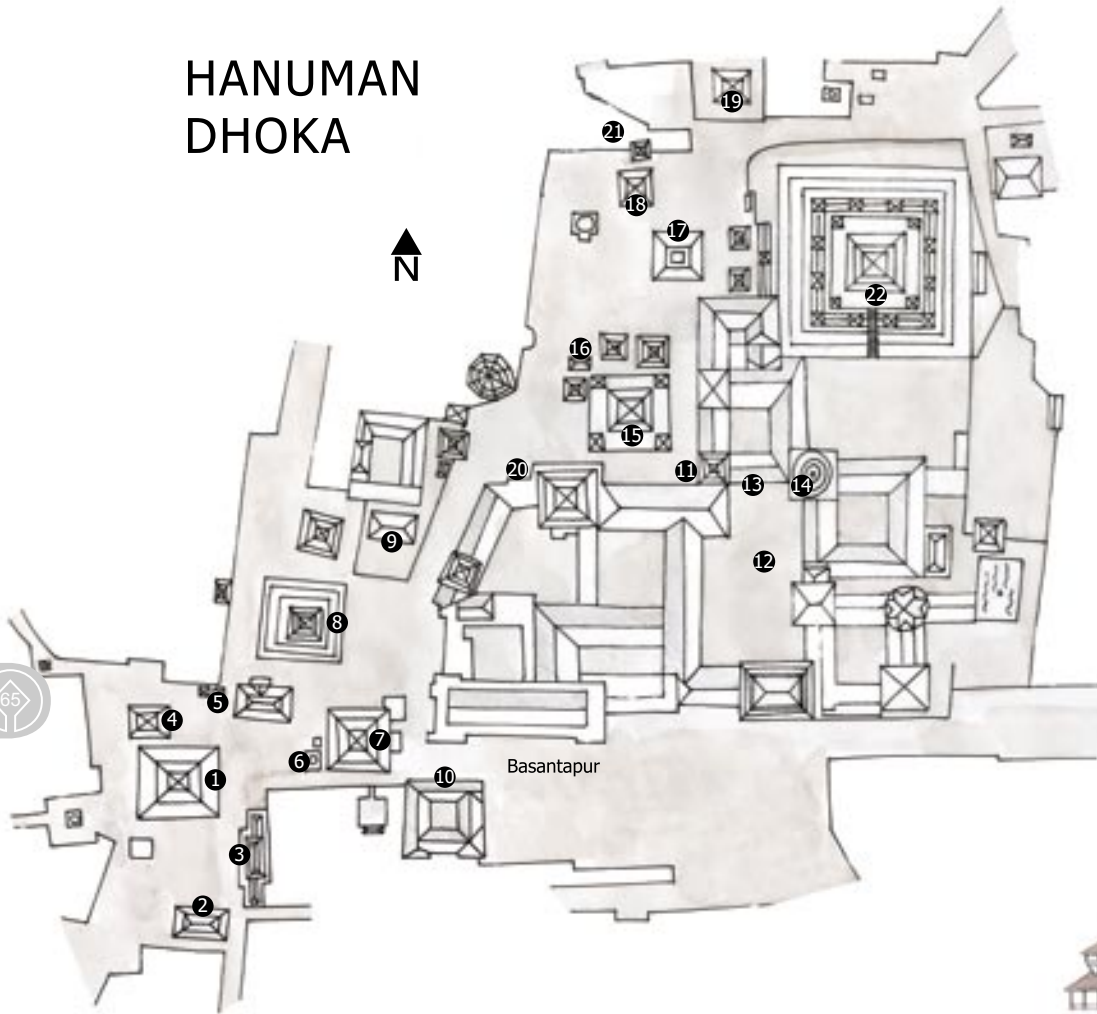




Akash Bhairav Temple
Indra Chowk

ॐ गते देवि नारम ॥ १०६० साल ११ महिना १६ गते ससंपन्न भयो रामम । श्री पू महाराजाधिर

HANUMAN DHOKA



Key

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Kasthamandapa | 12. Nasal Chowk |
| 2. Singha Sattal | 13. Sisa Baithak |
| 3. Kabindrapur | 14. Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple |
| 4. Shiva Temple | 15. Jagannath Temple |
| 5. Maru Ganesh | 16. Kal Bhairav |
| 6. Garuda Statue | 17. Kageshvar Temple |
| 7. Trailokya Mohan Temple | 18. Mahavishnu Temple |
| 8. Maju Dega Temple | 19. Mahendreshvar Temple |
| 9. Shiva Parvati Temple | 20. Swet Bhairav |
| 10. Kumari Ghar | 21. Kot |
| 11. Hanuman Dhoka | 22. Taleju Temple |





INDRA CHOWK

A little further from Tana Deval lies the **Indra Chowk**. This small square is a feast for the senses, always crowded and displaying multiple trading activities. It marks the start of the old market area that grew along the ancient trading route from Tibet to India and is the place to pick up boxes of tea, copper and pressed leaf plates, traditional woven yak blankets and any number of authentic souvenirs. Multi-storey traditional buildings tower over the business transactions being conducted below. The man who sells shawls calls out to the people who pass through the square, asking them to come and buy. Traders and merchants display their wares, which are predominantly textiles, inside little shops or on the pavements. Motorcycles and rickshaws appear from every corner making life difficult for the pedestrians. Besides being crowded, Indra Chowk is also noisy. The traders yell trying to advertise their goods and products. Amidst all this noise and the frenzied buying and selling stands the colourful temple dedicated to **Akash Bhairav**. It is two storied and the main shrine is on the first floor. At the centre the eyes of the Bhairav stare up to the sky (akash) from behind a silver mask and vermilion stains, and giving the temple its name.



Follow the road cutting diagonally through the Indra Chowk in a north easterly direction and you will plunge deeper into a world of eclectic shops, sweet smelling spices and hectic bartering.

On route you will pass the **Seto Machendranath Temple**, dedicated to a rain god with a loyal following in the Kathmandu Valley. Access to the temple is through a doorway on the north side of the street marked by two brass lions and a small statue of Buddha on a pillar. Inside, there are several statues and chaityas or stupas surrounding the temple proper. If you look carefully you will spot an anachronistic classical Greek style statue of a woman balancing a lamp on her head. This statue was added during the Rana period, when all things European were in vogue. The temple itself is very ornate with roofs of gilded copper and a gilded and embossed façade.

The square next to the temple is the **Kel Tol**. Continuing north east, you will pass on the left the first house in Kathmandu to have the modern convenience of glass windows, easily recognisable from the military themed frieze above the ground floor.

Finally you will enter an intersection of six roads, known as **Asan Tole**. There are a number of religious structures here, the largest being the triple-roofed pagoda-style **Annapurna Temple**. On the opposite side of the square is a two-story pagoda temple that houses a four-armed stone statue of Ganesh, wearing a silver crown and framed in gold. In the middle of the square is a small temple dedicated to Narayan (a manifestation of Vishnu) and a hole in the ground covered with an iron grill that contains a barely visible stone sculpture. The sculpture is the **Fish Monument**, and represents the story of the father and son astrologers who became estranged when the father miscalculated his newborn sons horoscope, and not believing the child to be his, he abandoned the baby and the child's mother. Many years later it transpired





that, unbeknown to the protagonists, the son had become his fathers' teacher. The two made predictions about where a fish falling from the sky during the monsoon would land, and the son won as he considered how far the fish would bounce before coming to a complete stop. His failure made the father reconsider the horoscope he had created for his child, and the two were finally reunited.

If you step into **New Road**, from Indra Chowk there is a fork in the road. This alley leads to a crowded corner where stalls of different coloured 'pote' strings (glass bead necklaces) are neatly lined one after another. The stalls are almost all owned by the muslim community and are frequented bead lovers, especially Hindu women who buy their potes for traditional religious occasions, including their wedding ceremonies. As one steps onto the New Road one is struck by the stark difference in architecture. While the buildings in Indra Chowk and the streets that lead to Asan are predominantly Newari, the New Road is completely different with wide streets and white stucco facades on either side. It is like stepping into a different reality after a journey into the past. Here too there are shops and a monstrous supermarket which sticks out because of its ugly matchbox structure. This is the **Bishal Bazaar**, which occupies the area where the Jana Sewa movie theatre used to stand. The theatre was reduced to ashes by a fire that broke out in 1961.

A little further from the supermarket is the earthquake memorial in **Bhugol Park** that was inaugurated in 1941.

The park was used as a meeting place for well-noted Nepali poets during the early stages of the rise against the Rana Regime. The Juddha Barun fire brigade building, which was completed in 1939, is at the crossing that leads to the **Basantapur Square**. A few of the old fire engines are still kept in the garage. The Basantapur Square is wide and spacious with little pavement shops selling curio and statues. The existence of the temple of Baniya Bahal proves that there used to be a courtyard here which was destroyed in the earthquake of 1934. Today, except for a few ruins and small shrines, nothing remains of the courtyard itself. Opposite the pavement shops stands the **Gaddi Baithak** which distinguishes itself from the rest of the palace buildings because of its neo-classical style. It was added to the palace in 1908 during the reign of the Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher.

New Road Sugar Rush: Shree Taja Gundpak Bhandar

As you enter New Road from the West, near the traditional parade ground of Tundikhel you inevitably encounter a crowd of people amassed on the left side of the road. They are clamouring to get a taste of the famous gundpak, a sugary mixture of khuwa (curd produced from boiled milk), sugar and nuts, for which the local store is famous. The ingredients are mixed together and boiled until they form a sticky mass which is said to be particularly beneficial for pregnant women. For over 50 years the shop has produced the sweet, brown foodstuff and many people wouldn't buy it from anywhere else.





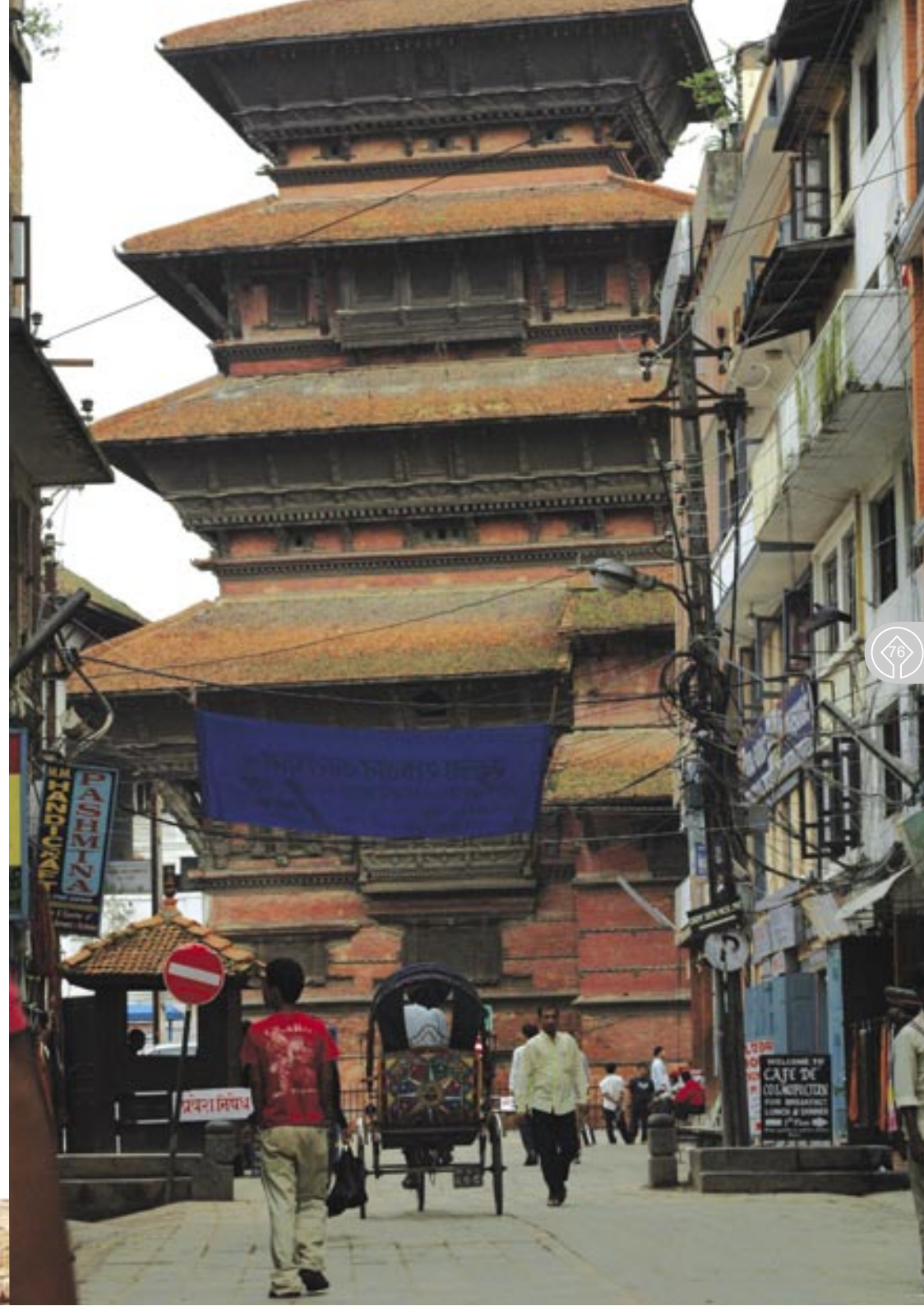
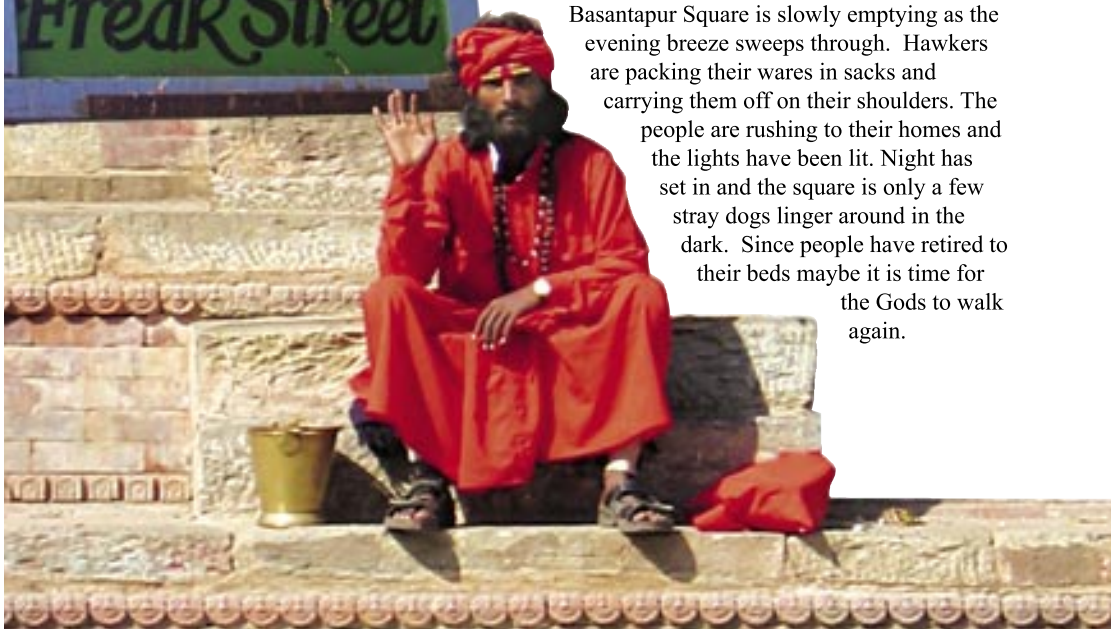


HIPPY

If 'hippy' culture has largely disappeared from Kathmandu, there are always a few places that remind one of the Flower Power days. The side street called Johche, or 'Freak Street' gained its notoriety during the hippy movement, and the trail that has since been left behind. Familiar tunes like 'Purple Haze', 'Casey Jones' and others which epitomized bong-hit philosophizing still blare from the music systems of small wayside shops instantly reminding one of the sixties. The hippy movement started in San Francisco and the legendary trail stretched from America and Europe to what were once known as the 'exotic countries' of the Orient, with the invariable tag 'mystic' attached to them.

The movement was preoccupied with 'alternative' culture and breaking away from the conventional attitudes of the bourgeoisie. Freak Street was a haven for the hippies. Cults which functioned on the lines of the Dead Heads were often found languishing in this corner of Kathmandu. Jhoche earned the name Freak Street as a result. The famous hindi song 'Dum Maro Dum' and much of the hippy themed Bollywood film Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, was shot in Kathmandu. The song went on to become a youth anthem.

Basantapur Square is slowly emptying as the evening breeze sweeps through. Hawkers are packing their wares in sacks and carrying them off on their shoulders. The people are rushing to their homes and the lights have been lit. Night has set in and the square is only a few stray dogs linger around in the dark. Since people have retired to their beds maybe it is time for the Gods to walk again.





DRUM MAKERS at HANUMAN DHOKA

by Anil Chitrakar

The sound of drums and musical instruments brings the people of Kathmandu onto the streets during the numerous festivals that make up the living heritage of the Kathmandu valley.



Deepak and his son Madan Kulu work in a small shop-cum-workshop at Pyafal, near Hanuman Dhoka. Just like their forefathers they have been making drums and repairing them for the cultural dances of Kathmandu for as long as they can recall. Historians tell us that drums and musical instruments such as ponga and pancha baja were introduced into the valley during the reign of King Narendra Deva in the seventh century. Seeing Madan work on the drums and create the sounds that reverberated the dabus of Kathmandu for over thirteen hundred years is a direct link to the past.

The drum makers are not in isolation. The drummers who come from different neighborhoods of Kathmandu have to practice at the Nasa deo or the temples of the dancing Shiva-Natheswor. They have to cleanse their bodies at the stone water spouts and wells. The rice fields around the city grow the crops that are payment for the artisans' services. The plinths that form the base of temples were designed to create an amphitheatre for the public: everything is interrelated. These activities, places and rituals constitute the integral mosaic that constitute the fabric of the historical cities like Kathmandu and makes them truly unique in the world

There are 57 tree species used to make the various drums and a recorded 47 groups around the city continue to play. The musical instruments made by Madan Kulu are crafted from the following tree species.

Kamari tree	(<i>Solanum nigrum</i>)
Alder tree	(<i>Alnus nepalensis</i>)
Tallow tree	(<i>Sapium insigne</i>)
Champ tree	(<i>Michelia champaca</i>)

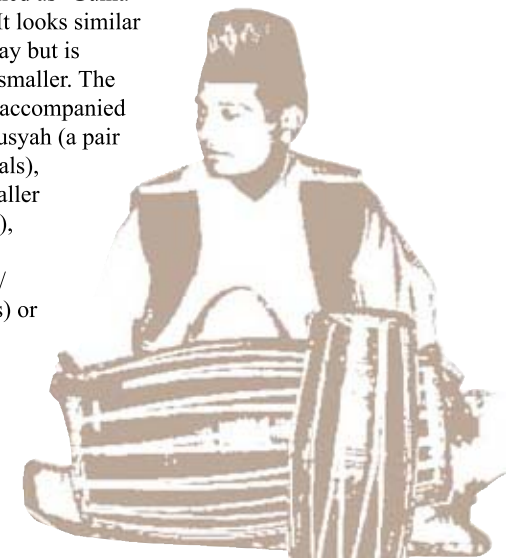
Some of the most popular drums played in the valley are:

Dhimay

The Dhimay is the most common musical instrument used by the Newars. It is considered to be the oldest musical instrument amongst the membranophones. Even though there is no evidence that Mahadeva invented this instrument (as legend says) there is evidence to support the fact that it dates back to the Kirat period. It resembles the Chyabrung of Kirat Rais and Dhola of the Tharu peopole. The Dhimay is played in almost all ceremonial marches by the Jyapus (Newari Farmers).

Dhah

Gunla (the monsoon months according to the Newar Calendar) are considered by Buddhists as holy. As the Dhah is played during Gunla it is also termed as 'Gunla Bajan'. It looks similar to Dhimay but is slightly smaller. The Dhah is accompanied with Bhussyah (a pair of cymbals), Tah (smaller cymbals), Muhali (clarinet/trumpets) or Bansuri (flute).





© Anil Chitrakar

Paschima

Myth claims that the Paschima was invented by lord Krishna. This instrument is also known as Mridanga. It is a double headed drum with tuning paste on the hide (Nasah) and before playing it a dough made of wheat flour is plastered on the other hide (Mankah). Paschima is accompanied by Baboocha (thin cymbals), Tah (thicker cymbal), Muhali (shwam) or Bansuri (flute).

Naya Khin

This is another musical instrument used in many rituals, and is mainly played by the Khadgi (Buthcher) caste. It is also called 'Naya Khin' or 'Dyah Khin'. Since it can be played in funeral processions it is sometime referred to as 'Seeh Bajan' (funeral drum). Long ago the Naya Khin was used to proclaim the news and other major announcements.

Dapa Khin

Dapa Khin has various names: Yakah Khin, Joh khin, Lala Khin and Deshi Khin. It is a double headed drum with tuning paste on both hides. Dapa Khin is mainly played in Dapa Bhajans (traditional hymns). If a single Khin is played it is called Yakah Khin and if two Khins are played, they are called 'Joh Khin'.

Nagara

The Nagara is a kettle shaped drum played with two sticks. This instrument has been described in purans (ancient Sanskrit texts) as Dundubhi, Dundhu, Dundhub, Bheri, Adamber etc. It is often Muhali that accompanies Dhah, Dapha Khin, Paschima, Nagara and others.



© Anil Chitrakar

MAKING OF MUSICAL DRUMS

1. As the first step, the wood trunks are purchased from the wholesaler in small, medium and large size and then hollowed out in sizes of 10"X13" 16"X18" and 18"X24".
2. Each piece is then covered with either goat or ox skin and sewn with the threads made of the same animal's skin to cover the holes at both ends.
3. The center of the skin is then ground with the hand for hours with a patch of 150 gm of iron oxide creating a black circle.
4. Once it is finished, the instrument is tested by playing the drums with fingers on the black circle containing iron oxide known as khari. The drums are tuned by adjusting the leather threads.



MASKS

by Supriya Kasaju

Nepal is known for its colorful festivals that are celebrated all year round. During the numerous processions, many revered decorative items such as statues and masks can be seen on the streets. Dancers twirling in their bright dresses, their faces hidden behind traditional masks play an important role in the ceremonies. They are a vibrant part of Nepals heritage and their origins can be traced back to the middle ages.

Two types of masks can be found in Nepal. During the festivals, ritual masks or 'Dyaca', are used. Dyaca are only made on special occasions, once or twice a year. They represent figures and deities linked to numerous legends and traditions, which are presented in a dance or street procession during the Valley's many festivals. Another more common type of mask is produced for the tourist market. They are made all year round except during the monsoon (June to August) when the artisans are employed working in the fields. These masks are produced in many different shapes and sizes and are widely available throughout the Valley.

The skills required to create these beautiful objects have been passed down from father to son throughout the ages and most of the procedure has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Only a specific caste of the Newars, called the Chitrakars, and the Lama priests are sanctioned to produce the ritual masks.

They are made from clay, which is covered with cloth, then painted and decorated. Once a year after the harvest season (November-January), the clay is collected from the farmland surrounding the villages.

1. Preparing the base-mask with moulds

Good quality clay is collected and then kneaded until it is workable. In order to ensure the material is strong enough, it is mixed with small pieces of cotton. Once this mixture is ready, it can be used for up to a week (after more than a week, the cotton may get

damaged and lose its strengthening qualities). The clay is then rolled into a flat disc and pushed by hand into the plaster moulds. Water is sprinkled over the clay and the surface is smoothed. Once dry, the mask is removed from the mould.

2. Preparing the mask for painting

The masks are then covered with a thin layer of cotton cloth. The adhesion of the cloth is facilitated by the use of a natural glue called sares. The use of maad on top of the cloth makes it stiff and smooth and ready for painting.

3. Painting and decorating the masks

Finally the masks are painted and decorated. Traditionally natural and locally made paints were used. First a base colour applied, according to the colour of the represented deity: white for Ganga, green for Vishnu, Red for Ganesh, etc. Then the face of the mask is painted and subsequent details are added with different colours of paint. The painted mask receives a single coat of varnish and finally details are added in gold paint.





Dhaka Cloth

As the name suggests 'Dhaka' is not Nepali by origin. The textile that now seems so symbolic of Nepal, was brought from Bangladesh during the Rana period and has since earned an important place in the culture of the Valley, and Nepal as a whole.



Dhaka weaving used to be mastered all over Nepal, but today, the craftsmen in Kathmandu are the main producers of the cloth. The area around Kel Tole north of Indra Chowk is the main area for purchasing the fabric and numerous shops along the road which leads from Indra Chowk to Ason Tole are full of Dhaka cloth, topis (traditional Nepali hats for men) and different types of Dhaka dresses for all ages.

The colours used for weaving are black, red, orange and white. The material used is pure cotton, ensuring freshness in summer, while the layered and padded Dhakas provide warmth and comfort in winter. The pre-dyed cotton, which is generally brought from India, is woven in Kathmandu by master craftsmen.

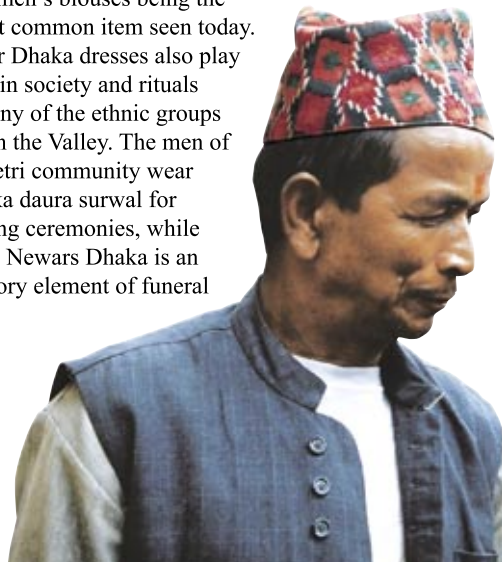
Interestingly, no two Dhaka patterns are the same, which shows the great creativity of the weavers.

It also adds to the value of the Dhaka cloth and Dhaka products, which are all truly unique.

Today, additional colours such as green and brown are sometimes added, new modern patterns are designed and new items are being made.

Over the years, Dhaka has become an integral part of Nepali society, and the Dhaka topi is especially popular in the streets of Kathmandu. Until a century ago, Dhaka clothing for both men (the traditional suit called daura surwal) and women (both blouses and shawls) dominated Nepali “fashion”, with women’s blouses being the most common item seen today.

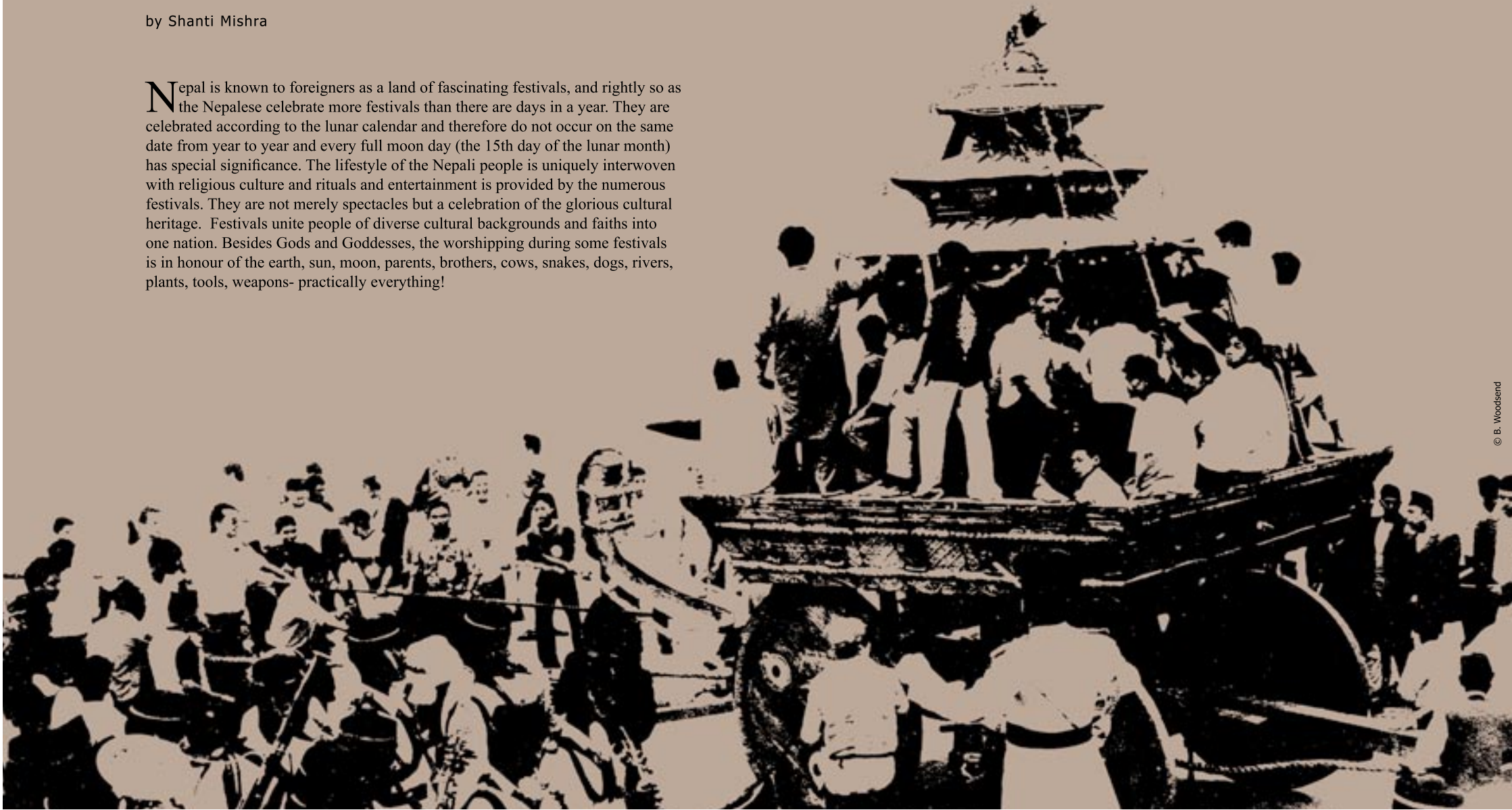
Other Dhaka dresses also play a role in society and rituals for many of the ethnic groups living in the Valley. The men of the Chhetri community wear a Dhaka daura surwal for wedding ceremonies, while for the Newars Dhaka is an obligatory element of funeral rites.



FESTIVALS

by Shanti Mishra

Nepal is known to foreigners as a land of fascinating festivals, and rightly so as the Nepalese celebrate more festivals than there are days in a year. They are celebrated according to the lunar calendar and therefore do not occur on the same date from year to year and every full moon day (the 15th day of the lunar month) has special significance. The lifestyle of the Nepali people is uniquely interwoven with religious culture and rituals and entertainment is provided by the numerous festivals. They are not merely spectacles but a celebration of the glorious cultural heritage. Festivals unite people of diverse cultural backgrounds and faiths into one nation. Besides Gods and Goddesses, the worshipping during some festivals is in honour of the earth, sun, moon, parents, brothers, cows, snakes, dogs, rivers, plants, tools, weapons- practically everything!



Some festivals such as Dasain and Tihar are celebrated throughout the country. Some are celebrated only in the cities. These include Indrajatra in Kathmandu, Rato Machhendranath jatra in Patan and Bisketjatra in Bhaktapur. Some are celebrated only in one village; Harishankar jatra in Pharping, Adinath jatra in Chobhar and Maha-Laxmi jatra in Thankot. The colorful festivals which are centered in the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square are:

Name	Month of Celebration
Gaijatra	Shrawan (Jul/Aug)
Indra Jatra	Bhadra (Aug/Sep)
Dasain & Phulpati	Asoj (Sep/Oct)
Taleju	Asoj (Sep/Oct)
Mila Punhi	Poush (Dec/Jan)
Basanti Panchami	Magha (Jan/Feb)
Holi	Falgun (Feb/Mar)
Chaita Dasain	Chaitra (Mar/Apr)

Gaijatra

(Shrawan/July-August)

Gaijatra (Festival of the Cow) is one of the most attractive and interesting annual festivals and is based on a historical event. It lasts for a week with performances of dance, drama, satire, and comedies that are held in different squares and toles (neighborhoods) of all cities. This festival was initiated by a Malla King about seven hundred years ago to console his grief-stricken Queen on the death of their son. The Gaijatra is celebrated in different places with the same zeal though with some variation. In Kathmandu, from early morning, cows and boys wearing papier-mâché cow headdresses are accompanied by a procession through the traditional streets by the people whose family members died during the previous year. It is believed that on this day the Yama (God of Death) opens the gate for the deceased to go to heaven with the help of cows. The cows and boys are accompanied by men dressed as women, goats, animals, tourists, politicians and lovers who proceed around the traditional routes. Hanuman Dhoka and the living goddess Kumari's palace are the ideal places to view the procession from.

Indra Jatra

(Bhadra/August-September)

This is one of the most popular Nepalese festivals and is celebrated with great pomp both by Hindus and Buddhists in the honour of God Indra, living Goddess Kumari, Ganesh and Bhairav. The eight day festival begins by erecting a long ceremonial wooden pole at Hanuman Dhoka in order to propitiate God Indra, the god of Rain who is supposed to bring peace and

prosperity to the people. As part of the celebrations masked classical dancers assemble in the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square to perform beautiful traditional dances and the Square becomes a hub of different cultural and religious activities.

On the third day of the festival, Kumari jatra starts. Its origin is attributed to the Newari King Jai Prakash Malla in 1740. It is also the day on which King Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered Kathmandu. The chariots of Kumari, Ganesh and Bhairav are decorated and taken around the city in a grand procession accompanied by traditional music and a military band. The pulling of the chariots starts from Basantapur after the King, Queen and diplomats pay homage to Kumari, Ganesh and Bhairav and culminates in front of the Kumari palace with the masked dances of Lakhae, Bhairav and Pulkisi (elephant). The Kumari receives special puja (worship), offerings of flowers and coins throughout her journey through the different parts of Kathmandu. From this day on the Dasa

Avatar (ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu) are displayed each evening on the plinth of the Narayan temple opposite the Kumari temple and people from all over the country come to see the jatra during this period. On the day of Kumari jatra a procession of women, mostly comprised of Buddhists, takes place in honour of Dagi to commemorate the deceased. The procession starts and ends at the Kasthamandap. Throughout Indra Jatra the Durbar Square is transformed into an open theatre where the folk dances of Kathmandu, as well as the classical dances of the deities and their followers are performed, accompanied by classical instruments.

Dasain and Phulpati

(Asoj/September-October)

Dasain is the greatest Nepalese national festival and symbolizes the victory of good over evil. It is celebrated throughout Nepal by all castes and creeds. During this time the goddess Durga is worshipped with great devotion as the



Gai Jatra





Nepalese believe that she emerged from the combined forces of the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to kill all demons including their leader, Mahisasur.

Phulpati is observed during Dasain. An offering of the holy flower and kalash (symbolic vessel) is brought from the Royal palace of Gorkha, the ancestral home of the Shah dynasty. High officials at Jamal near Ranipokhari (the Queen's pond) welcome it. With the arrival of the auspicious Phulpati procession, celebrations and a gun salute take place to honour it at Tundikhel where a grand military function is held. The King and the Queen grace this function along with diplomats and other dignitaries. After the function, the Phulpati is carried by Brahmins on a decorated khat (palanquin) to Hanuman Dhoka Palace. This procession includes traditionally dressed ladies-in-waiting from the palace. A band and government officials dressed in the national costumes follow. The King and Queen, along with high military officials, welcome Phulpati at the Hanuman Dhoka.

Perhaps the most dramatic element of the Dasain festival, at least for tourists, is the eighth day called the 'Maha Asthami'. On this day sacrifices are performed in almost every house. The night of the eighth day is called 'Kal Ratri', or 'dark night' when hundreds of goats, sheep and buffaloes are sacrificed at the mother goddess temples. The Hanuman Dhoka Palace is busy throughout the night with pujas in almost every courtyard. Great feasts are held in the homes of ordinary

people where, naturally, a large amount of meat is consumed.

Taleju Temple Festival (Asoj/September-October)

This auspicious festival is also held during Dasain on Mahanawami, a day before Vijay Dashami (Victory day). It is the only time during the year that the towering Taleju temple in the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square is opened to the public for worship. Hundreds of devotees of Taleju Bhawani (Durga) dressed in their new attire can be seen queuing from early morning in order to pay their respects.

Mila Punhi (Poush/December-January)

All the full moon days are observed as auspicious occasions to celebrate traditional festivals in Nepal, but the full moon day of Poush is celebrated as Mila Punhi. Early in the morning the Kalash representing Changu Narayan is carried from his hilltop temple through Mulpani, Gokarna, Baudhdha, Chabahil, Gyaneshwor and Jamal in a procession accompanied by traditional musical instruments terminating at the closed gate of the Taleju Temple. The living goddess Kumari is carried by the caretaker with a small band of music from her nearby residence to welcome Changu Narayan. All the worshipping onlookers watch her sitting on a low wooden stool in front of the Narayan. At the end, the Taleju gate opens to take Changu Narayan inside, guns boom in salute, and at around five in the evening the Kumari is carried back to her palace. All rituals are performed by the authorized priests inside the Royal Courtyard. According to folklore, the Changu Narayan

planned to leave Nepal for Benaras, India but he cancelled his visit after seeing numerous blackened earthen pots smashed by the children on that day, which he considered a bad omen, and went back to his temple in the early morning to protect the people of the valley.

Basanta Panchami (Magha/January-February)

Basanta Panchami is celebrated on Panchami – the fifth day of the waxing moon of Magha. On this day, Saraswati, the goddess of learning and wisdom is widely worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists. It also marks the advent of Basanta, the Spring season. A grand religious celebration is held at the courtyard of the old Hanuman Dhoka palace to honour Goddess Saraswati and offer an invocation to Spring. It has been duly observed as a state function from the time of the Newar Kings who would give their command to start the seasonal song, “Basant”. Even today, Basanta Panchami is given a state performance in the royal courtyard of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace. The King, high officials and dignitaries witness the ceremony and listen to the song of Spring, sung in the morning by well known classical singers. Holi (Falgun/February-March)

Holi is a week long festival of merrymaking and playful pranks somewhat like the Halloween celebrations in the West. Families and particularly the young revel in splattering each other with coloured powders and throwing ‘lolas’ (water balloons) at passersby. Although it is a Hindu festival, Buddhists also take

great pleasure in celebrating it – a unique feature of Nepalese culture. In Kathmandu, it starts with raising the ‘Chir’, a ceremonial pole topped with three umbrella-like tiers, each fringed with strips of colourful cloth, near the Kumari’s Palace in the Durbar Square. The Gurujuko Paltan (an army unit) in their 19th century uniforms fire a salute into the air to inform all that Holi has begun. This festival is very democratic as everyone is free to play Holi with anyone and everyone – no discrimination of sex, caste, religion and position. Thamel and Indra Chowk are ideal places to observe the fun, if you don’t mind joining in.

Chaitra Dasai (Chaitra/March-April)

This festival, the smaller version of the larger Dasain festival, is observed to commemorate the birthday of Goddess Durga, the creator, preserver, dissolver and ruler of the world. It is celebrated on the eighth of Chaitra at about 9 am in front of the banners and insignia of various military units. Goats, sheep and buffalos are once again sacrificed in the name of the goddess Durga (Bhagawati) amidst many rituals in the courtyard of the Kot. The animals are beheaded by a single stroke of the sword. In the past, anyone interested in the audience could volunteer to dispatch one of the animals but this custom has since been stopped. It lasts about 2 hours and concludes after the military commander has smeared each of the banners with the sacrificial blood. Foreign visitors are welcome to view from the balcony overlooking the Kot close to the Police station at Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square.





Keshar Mahal GARDEN OF DREAMS

Photography by Marianno Bello



Whilst the Kathmandu Valley is packed with temples, markets, winding streets and courtyards, it is not renowned for its green spaces. Until recently, other than the military parade ground near New Road, chances to relax amidst greenery and trees in the urban centre were almost non-existent. A secret Garden on the edge of Kathmandu's tourist district of Thamel has changed all that.

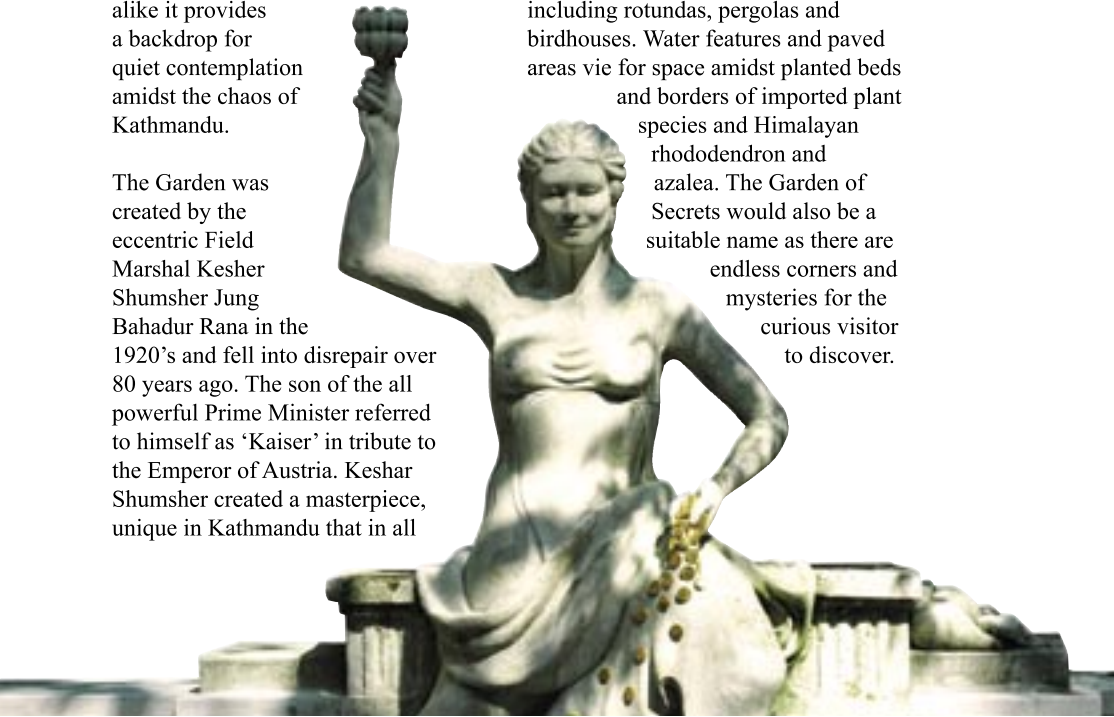
The Gardens of the Rana palace complex called Keshar Mahal, are also known as The Garden of six seasons or Garden of Dreams. The Garden of Dreams is indeed what its name suggests- a dream-like enclosure of beautifully landscaped historical horticulture and architecture, tucked behind high walls and only skipping distance from the heart of Thamel. For longstanding residents and visitors alike it provides a backdrop for quiet contemplation amidst the chaos of Kathmandu.

The Garden was created by the eccentric Field Marshal Keshar Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana in the 1920's and fell into disrepair over 80 years ago. The son of the all powerful Prime Minister referred to himself as 'Kaiser' in tribute to the Emperor of Austria. Keshar Shumsher created a masterpiece, unique in Kathmandu that in all

aspects reflects his interest in European gardens, art and architecture. This is also evident in his personal collection of books, which can be visited in the sumptuous Keshar Mahal library next door.

The oasis that stands today was part of a grand design which incorporated formal lawns and wooded areas adjacent to the Palace that currently houses the Ministry of Education. Only the central and eastern sections of the gardens remain today, and they have been painstakingly brought back to life thanks to Austrian Development Aid, the Ministry of Education, and the technical ability of Eco Himal/Nepal.

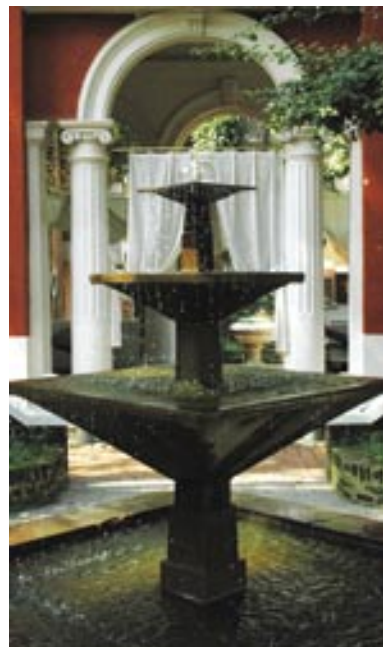
Of the original 6 pavilions- one for each Nepali season, only three remain, accompanied by a number of neo-European architectural curiosities including rotundas, pergolas and birdhouses. Water features and paved areas vie for space amidst planted beds and borders of imported plant species and Himalayan rhododendron and azalea. The Garden of Secrets would also be a suitable name as there are endless corners and mysteries for the curious visitor to discover.





The garden's design has much in common with European gardens and is with its formal and axial arrangements remarkably up to date for its time, comparable to the prevalent fashion of early 20th century Europe.

Access to the garden is through a gate on Tridevi Marg, the main thoroughfare leading into Thamel from the east (opposite the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Secretariat). Entrance is charged at Rs 80 for Nepalis, Rs 160 for foreigners or Rs 40 for children, senior citizens and the disabled. The funds go towards the upkeep of the garden and employment of the army of staff required to keep the Garden of Dreams in shape.





BABAR MAHAL
REVISITED



The monumental European-style white stuccoed buildings that are scattered around the Valley date from the Rana period and are often derided by purists who poke fun at their overblown flamboyancy. They can, however, provide truly original accommodation if the right function is discovered for them. The smaller subsidiary buildings often combine elegant proportions with networks of rooms constructed on a human scale, and are thus amply suited to development for commercial purposes.

The **Babar Mahal Revisited** complex of courtyards, shops and restaurants has been successfully developed into a recreational haven. This section of the original palace functioned as the cow shed and carriage house to the palace proper, built by Babar Shamsher Bahadur Rana. Whilst the bulk of the property was nationalised in 1966, this small section was returned to his family as compensation in 1980. Babar Shamsher's grandson joined forces with the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust and together they breathed new life into the crumbling masonry.



These days Babar Mahal Revisited flourishes as a 'destination' dining and shopping location with a number of artisan boutiques, galleries, jewelry shops, restaurants and bars. Yoga and Tai Chi are conducted in some of the upper-floor rooms and fine wines and liquors can be bought from the delicatessen in the courtyard. Whilst this smacks of the high-life the prices are on the whole no more than in Thamel and there is certainly less pressure to buy. Most Taxi's will know how to find the complex, which is located off the Maitighar roundabout at the end of Ramshah path, on route to Patan from Kathmandu.





Restoration of KAL BHAIRAV SHRINE

by Rohit Ranjitkar

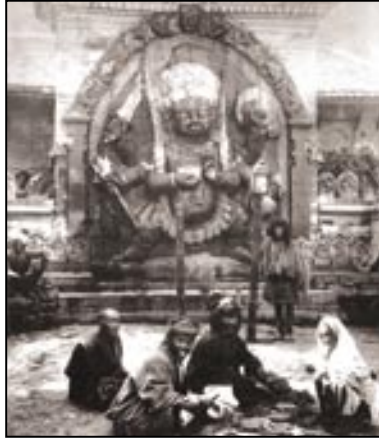
Standing imposingly at the center of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, the Shrine of Kal Bhairav has evolved as a crucial part of the historic ensemble of the square since its consecration in the 17th century. A very rare example of stone architecture, the image of Kal Bhairav represents the God Shiva in his ferocious manifestation. Worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists as a seer of truth, the monument of Kal Bhairav has a significant place in the religion and culture of the Valley. The original configuration of the structure was completely lost under the several layers of continuous alterations and well intentioned votive offerings left by devotees. The first recorded major alteration was triggered by the devastating earthquake of 1934. The upper level, including the cornice and the pinnacles, were severely damaged and subsequent repairs completely changed the shape of the upper structure.

Conservation Issues and Strategies

The historic buildings in the Kathmandu Valley present a number of serious challenges regarding questions of historic material retention, authenticity and justification of replacement carving or fabric. Kal Bhairav is representative of these monuments as it incorporates earthquake reconstructions, votive offerings and incomplete historic details. Much of the fabric dated from later repairs and the character and quality of these alterations varied considerably. The image is original, as are the terracotta images of the goddesses. However, the structure and fabric of the architectural frame of the shrine had been considerably altered, which only became evident during the

course of dismantling for restoration. A series of historical photographs provided information about the evolution of the shrine over time. The photographs date from 1890 to 1934 and document the architectural facade with no changes. Significantly this proves that the shrine survived the earthquake without suffering major damage. A subsequent rebuilding between 1936 and 1991 did however greatly simplify the facade, while adding depth to the structure through the addition of new back wall. This was most likely done as structural reinforcement. In 1991 the entire architectural frame was clad in marble tiles and a concrete frame-supported roof was added to cover the shrine.





Restoration design question - Conserve the 1936 and 1991 renovations?

When the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) began work on the shrine they were concerned with how much damage would have been done to the underlying stone fabric by the marble tiles and cement mortar. However, when they removed the cladding in 2004, expecting to find the colossal stone arch with sculptural figures and the flanking assembly of columns and entablature, they found a very much reduced version of the original composition. Having discovered that the 17th century structure was completely lost, a study was made of the 20th century structure to evaluate whether it was worthy of conservation and if so, by which means. The later rebuilding and additions had been undertaken with intention and design, however inappropriate. The design quality of the 1971 repair (i.e. addition of roof structure) was performed by a construction overseer rather than a traditional craftsman or artist, without considering the prime image, thus it was concluded that it did not merit conservation.

Likewise, the 20th century structure failed to convince KVPT of its restorability. Much of the stonework was of poor quality, and was structurally unstable. The composition of orders framing the colossal image appeared to be a hasty building job from post-earthquake repair years, with little formal sympathy for the fine focal image. Luckily excellent documentation of the pre 1934 configuration existed, which was used as the basis for the restoration.



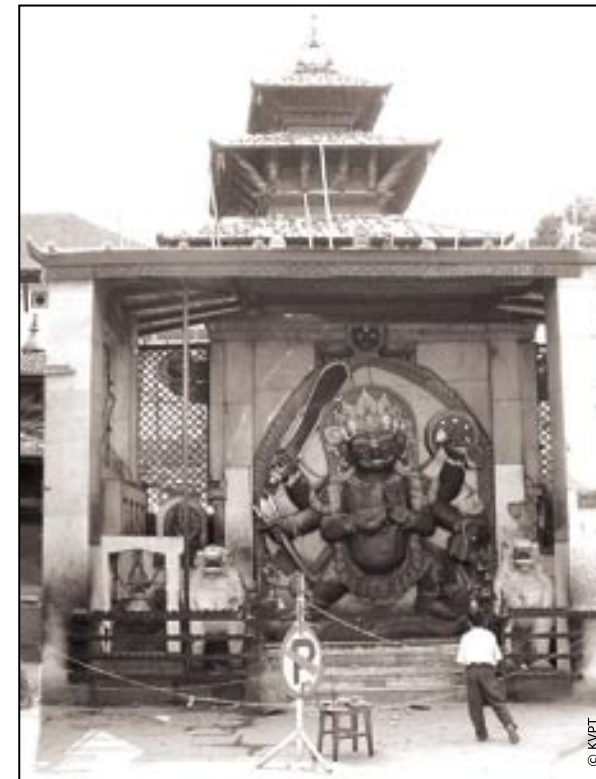
Documentation and revival of the original

The first phase of was to record the existing condition prior to the proposed restoration. Comparing the existing state of the structure with the series of photographs provided ample evidence of its transition from a free standing monument to enclosed shrine. The structure had been subjected to considerable remodeling and changes since 1936, and KVPT aimed to restore the shrine to its original pre-1934 design. Drawings were prepared on the basis of the pre-earthquake photographs and many of the historic details such as the tympanum and pinnacles were reproduced with relative exactitude.

Restoring the Kal Bhairav shrine

The study and documentation process to redesign the stone architecture from the photographs, as well as the enormous number of excellent stone commissions, meant that the human factor weighted the argument in favor of re-carving the lost carvings (i.e. pinnacles, cornice details and tympanum). Where vital components were missing, such as the elaborate tympanum above the focus image and the details of the stone pinnacles, they were re-carved based on the historic photographs and documentation.

The KVPT not only focused on the “visible” restoration of shrine but also the structural restoration, which has been a key component of all their projects. An additional mesh of stainless steel members was introduced in the core brick masonry structure of the frame in order to tie the outer skin of stone blocks together. This extra





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bracing of the stones will support and stabilise the structure in the event of seismic movement.

Offering sculptures and adding layers of polychrome to the central image has been common practice for as long as the statue has existed; but they were not part of the original structure. Over time the shrine was adorned with offerings such as the small images of the mother goddesses and bells. Restoring the monument at the expense of these offerings would have been disrespectful of the prevailing rituals and people's sentiment and considering this significant aspect of the project the details were incorporated into the restoration of the Kal Bhairav shrine. The effort of the Trust to reinstate the significant part of the historic ensemble incorporated various aspects of conservation methodology with the integration of new technology and traditional construction methods.



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KINGS & RULERS OF NEPAL

Pre-Historic 1 or Gopala Period

Before 700 BC

The period lasted for 521 years and the dynasty had 7 Kings
First King – Bhuktaman

Pre-Historic 2 or Kirata Period

c. 700 BC – 78 AD

There were 29 kings of the Kirata dynasty
First King – Yalambar
Last King - Gasti

Table 1. The Rulers of Licchavi Period (c. 78 - c. 879 AD)

Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
The first Licchavi king Bhaskaravarma, was followed by his descendants Bhumivarma, Chandravarma, Jayavarma, Varsavarma, Sarvavarma, Prithvi, Jestha, Hari, Kuber, Siddhi, Haridattavarma, Vasudeva...	NA
Vrsadeva	c. 400 AD
Sankaradeva	c. 425 AD
Dharmadeva	c. 450 AD
Manadeva I	464-505 AD
Mahideva	NA
Vasantadeva	506-532 AD
Manudeva	NA
Vamanadeva	538 AD
Ramadeva	545 AD
Ganadeva	560-565 AD
Gangadeva	567 AD
Bhaumagupta	c. 567-590 AD
Manadeva II	c. 575 AD
Sivadeva I	590-604 AD
Amsuvarma	605-621 AD
Udayadeva	621 AD
Dhruvadeva + Jisnugupta	624-625 AD
Bhimarjunadeva + Jisnugupta	631-633 AD
Jisnugupta	NA
Visnugupta	633 AD
Bhimarjunadeva + Visnugupta	640-641 AD
Visnugupta	NA
Narendradeva	643-679 AD
Sivadeva II	694-705 AD
Jayadeva II	713-733 AD
Manadeva III	756 AD
Baliraja	826 AD
Baladeva	847 AD
Manadeva IV	877 AD

Table 2. The Rulers, or Probable Rulers of the Transitional or 'Dark Period' (c. 879-1200 AD)

Rulers or Probable Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Rudradeva	NA
Balarjunadeva	NA
Raghavadeva	879 AD
Sankaradeva I	920 AD
Gunakamadeva I	987-990 AD
Narendradeva I + Udayadeva	998 AD
Udayadeva	1004 AD
Nirbhayadeva	1005 AD
Nirbhayadeva + Rudradeva I	1008 AD
Bhojadeva	1011 AD
Rudradeva I + Bhojadeva	1012 AD
Bhojadeva + Rudradeva I + Laxmikamadeva I	1015 AD
Laxmikamadeva I	NA
Jayadeva	1024-1039 AD
Bhaskaradeva	1045-1048AD
Baladeva	1048-1060 AD
Pradyumnakamadeva	1060-1066 AD
Nagarjunadeva	1066-1069 AD
Sankaradeva II	1069-1083 AD
Vamadeva	1083-1085 AD
Harsadeva	1085-1099 AD
Simhadeva	1099-1122 AD
Sivadeva	1099-1126 AD
Indradeva	1126-1137 AD
Manadeva	1137-1140 AD
Narendradeva II	1140-1146 AD
Anandadeva I	1147-1166 AD
Rudradeva II	1167-1174 AD
Amritadeva	1174-1178 AD
Somesvaradeva	1178-1183 AD
Gunakamadeva II	1185-1195 AD
Laxmikamadeva II	1192-1197 AD
Vijayakamadeva	1192-1200 AD

Table 3. The Rulers of Early Malla Period (1200-1482 AD)

Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Arideva Malla I	1200-1216 AD
Abhaya Malla	1216-1255 AD
Ranasuradeva	c. 1221 AD
Jayadeva	1256-1258 AD
Bhimadeva	1258-1271 AD
Sinha Malla	1271-1274 AD
Ananta Malla	1274-1307 AD
Ananadadeva II	1308-1320 AD
Ari Malla II	1320-1344 AD
Rajadeva	1347-1361 AD
Arjunadeva	1361-1381 AD
Sthiti Malla (Jayasthiti Malla)	1382-1395 AD
Dharma Malla	1396-1408 AD
Jyotir Malla	1408-1428 AD
Yaksya Malla	1428-1482 AD

After Yaksya Malla, his sons established different independent kingdoms in Kathmandu (Kantipur), Bhaktapur (Bhadgaun) and Lalitpur (Patan). In time, the rivalry between these brotherhoods led to fragmentation and poor rule in the country as well as the greatest competitive building periods.

**Table 4. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Bhaktapur (Bhadgaun)
(1482-1769 AD)**

Malla Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Raya, Ratna, Rana, Bhima	1482-1504 AD
Vira	1504 AD
Bhuvana	1505-1519 AD
Rana, Vira, Jita	1519-1522 AD
Rana, Bhima, Vira, Jita	1522-1523 AD
Prana alone, with Jita, or with Jita & Vira	1524-1548 AD
Viswa	1548-1560 AD
Trailokya alone, with Tribhuvana, or with Tribhuvan & Gangadevi	1561-1613 AD
Jagajjyotir	1614-1637 AD
Naresa	1637-1643 AD
Jagatprakasa	1643-1672 AD
Jitamitra alone or with Ugra	1673-1696 AD
Bhupatindra	1696-1722 AD
Ranajit	1722-1769 AD

**Table 5. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Kathmandu (Kantipur)
(1482-1768 AD)**

Malla Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Ratna alone or with Ari	1484-1520 AD
Surya	1520-1529 AD
Amara (Narendra)	1529-1560 AD
Mahendra	1560-1574 AD
Sadasiva	1575-1581 AD
Sivasimha (with Ranajitsimha)	1578-1619 AD
Laxminarasimha	1619-1641 AD
Pratapa	1641-1674 AD
Nripendra	1674-1680 AD
Parthivendra	1680-1687 AD
Bhupalendra	1687-1700 AD
Bhaskara (Mahindrasimha)	1700-1722 AD
Jagajjaya	1722-1734 AD
Jayaprakasa (reign interrupted by his infant son)	c. 1769 AD
Jyotiprakasa (infant son)	1746-1752 AD

**Table 6. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Lalitpur (Patan)
(1482-1768 AD)**

Malla Rulers, mahapatras & one Shah King	Approx. Reign duration
Raya Malla (his brothers & nephews in varying combinations)	1482-1519 AD
Visnusimha, the pradhan mahapatra, ruling Patan independent of Malla	1536 AD
Purandarshimha, alone or with his brothers	1560-1597 AD
Malla rule reestablished through annexation by Sivasimha	1597-1619 AD
Siddhinarasimha	1619-1661 AD
Srinivasa	1661-1684 AD
Yognarendra	1684-1705 AD
Lokaprakasa	1705-1706 AD
Indra	1706-1709 AD
Mahindra	1709-1714 AD
Viranarasimha (a rival ruled briefly)	1709 AD
Riddhinarasimha	1715-1717 AD
Bhaskara (Mahindrasimha)	1717-1722 AD
Yogprakasa	1722-1729 AD
Visnu	1729-1745 AD
Rajyaprakasa	1745-1758 AD
Viswajit	1758-1760 AD
Jayaprakasa of Kathmandu	1760-1762 AD
Ranajit of Bhaktapur	1762-1763 AD
Jayaprakasa (again)	1763 AD
Dalmardana Shah from Nuwakot	1764-1765 AD
Tejnarasimha Malla	1765-1768 AD

Table7. The Shah Rulers of unified Nepal (1769 AD -)

Shah Rulers	Approx. Reign duration	Prime Ministers	Dates of Office
Prithvi Narayan (1722-1775 AD)	1769-1775 AD		
Ascended to throne of Gorkha 1743 AD			
Conquered Kathmandu and Patan 1768 AD			
Conquered Bhaktapur 1769 AD			
Pratap Singh (1751-1777 AD)	1775-1777 AD		
Rana Bahadra (1775-1806 AD)	1777-1799 AD		
Abdicated 1799 AD			
Girvan Yuddha Bikram (1797-1816 AD)	1799-1816 AD	Bhimsen Thapa	1806-1837 AD
Rajendra Bikram (1813-1881 AD)	1816-1847 AD	Mathbar Singh Thapa	1843-1845 AD
Dethroned 1847 AD		Jung Bahadur Rana	1846-1856 AD
		Bam Bahadur Rana	1856-1857 AD
		Jung Bahadur Rana	1857-1877 AD
Surendra Bikram (1847-1881 AD)	1847-1881 AD	Rana Uddip Singh	1877-1885 AD
Prithvi Bir Bikram (1875-1911 AD)	1881-1911 AD	Bir Shumsher	1885-1901 AD
		Dev Shumsher	1901 AD
		Chandra Shumsher	1901-1929 AD
Tribhuvan Bir Bikram (1906-1955 AD)	1911-1955 AD	Bhim Shumsher	1929-1932 AD
		Juddha Shumsher	1932-1945 AD
		Padma Shumsher	1945-1948 AD
		Mohan Shumsher	1948-1951 AD
End of 104 years of interim Rana Period (1846-1950 AD)			
Mahendra Bir Bikram (1920-1972 AD)	1955-1972 AD		
Birendra Bir Bikram (1945-2001 AD)	1972-2001 AD		
Dipendra Bir Bikram (1971-2001 AD)	2001AD		
Gyanendra Bir Bikram	2001- 2005 AD		



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